



PlayStation®2

PS2  
PlayStation®Portable

PLAYSTATION®3

# PlayStation®

Official Magazine - Australia

## WORLD EXCLUSIVE! ALIENS

The classic sci-fi splatter-fest invades PS3 at last! The bitch is back!

## PREVIEW! EXPLOSION!

- Star Wars: The Force Unleashed
- Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway
- Tomb Raider: Underworld
- Rainbow Six Vegas 2
- Just Cause 2
- Dead Space
- Grand Theft Auto IV
- + loads more!

FIRST LOOK!  
**RESISTANCE 2**  
Insomniac's stellar 60-player sequel!

REVIEWED!  
**CONDEMNED 2**  
Monolith's blood-soaked thriller rated!



## + INSIDE:

### RACE DRIVER

The future of V8 Supercars exposed - exclusive interview!

### VERDICT! LOST

Secrets revealed - Oceanic flight 815 crash-lands on PS3!

### TIME TO DIE

A killer look at gaming's most gruesome deaths!



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PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360 LIVE

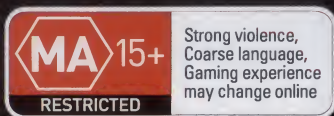


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HEAD BACK TO THE STREETS OF SIN CITY,  
IN AN EXPLOSIVE, ALL NEW ADVENTURE  
AND END THE TERRORIST THREAT ONCE  
AND FOR ALL...

# BEAT THE ODDS



PLAYSTATION 3



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Tom Clancy's  
**RAINBOW SIX**  
**VEGAS 2**

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violence

Bring the epic universe of Ratchet & Clank  
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*This is living*



A detailed promotional image for the video game Ratchet and Clank: Tools of Destruction. The scene is set in a lush, green jungle environment. In the background, a towering, futuristic city with blue and white architecture rises into the sky. In the foreground, a large, golden, mechanical structure, possibly a piece of machinery or a vehicle, is partially visible. A purple and gold mechanical arm, likely belonging to Ratchet, is shown holding a large, circular, purple and gold object. A small, orange, round robot with large eyes is also visible. The title "DESTRUCTION NEVER LOOKED BETTER" is prominently displayed in the center in a bold, white, italicized font with a black outline. In the bottom right corner, there is a small image of the PlayStation 3 game case. The website "www.ratchetandclank.com" is in the bottom left, and "ONLY ON PLAYSTATION 3" is at the very bottom.

***DESTRUCTION  
NEVER  
LOOKED BETTER***

[www.ratchetandclank.com](http://www.ratchetandclank.com)



**ONLY ON PLAYSTATION 3**



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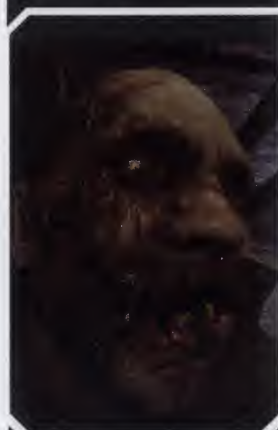
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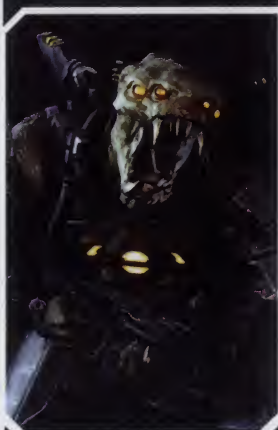
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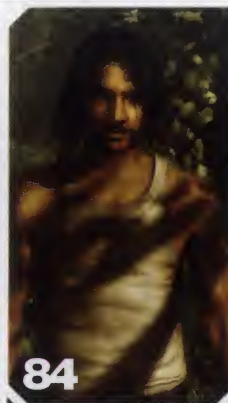
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**“OPS is still your best source for everything PlayStation...”**

**A**pparently, editorials are a tricky thing to get right. I can't really say one way or the other, as this is my first. Ask me in a few months.

I *could* bang on for a while about what we've got in the magazine this month, but that undermines all the hard yakka we did with the contents page. Plus, unless you're reading this magazine backwards – and apparently 15% of people do (a statistic I just made up) – you've already read that.

No, I think rather take this opportunity to both congratulate and thank Narayan 'Naz' Pattison. Naz shipped out on a few weeks holidays for this issue, but popped back into the office to say hi – and *resign*. After a great many years on *OPS*, and *OPS2* before it, ol' Naz has decided it's about time to punch out and move on to pastures new. Everything I know about games magazines has come directly from Naz, and I doubt I'd be half the writer I am today without his help and advice over the years. See you around, mate.

What does this mean for you, our faithful readers? It just means we're changing the sheriff, but not the law. *OPS* is still your best source for everything PlayStation – written by gamers, for gamers. And it's only going to get better.

Oh, and my favourite alien? Alf. I don't really like cats either.

**LUKE REILLY, Deputy Editor**

PS3 online: **Capt\_Flashheart**

## Our favourite aliens...

### NARAYAN PATTISON

My favourite alien would be the one I make with the insanely hot Natasha Henstridge (*Species*) – on a mission to merge her DNA with ours to create a super race. Natasha, my number's in the book.

Online: **The\_Duude**



### MARK SERRELS

You know, one some might say that Markie himself is an 'Alien' of sorts, being a pale, pasty Scotsman in a world of tanned, mullet-bearing Aussies. I hate cricket and I can't work a barbie. I do like Harold Bishop though...

Online: **Serrels**



### PHILLIP JORGE

I love Ewoks. Those cute furry little guys, with their little spears, just waddlin' around! I cried for two days straight when I found out that they were actually hideous dwarves *dressed up* as Ewoks (shudder).

Online: **PhiLLipO**



### ADAM MATHEW

My favourite alien without a doubt has got to be Kim Basinger in *My Stepmother is an Alien*. I'd happily get caught in her tractor beam any old day. Come aboard and befriend my Wookiee co-pilot. Giggity gig-gitty...

Online: **YourmumsAWESOME**



### ANTHONY O'CONNOR

It's not going to come as a surprise, but the Rob Bottin designed alien forms in John Carpenter's *The Thing* have, in my opinion, yet to be beaten. Bigger, I didn't even get one dick or fart joke in this week. Um, BOOBIES!

Online: **stoxly242**



### JAMES ELLIS

K-Pax. I haven't seen the movie, and probably never will, but apparently he bears a striking resemblance to my dad. Ergo, in 30 years, I may bear a striking resemblance to K-Pax. Ergo, K-Pax is awesome.

Online: **gtfaster49**



**PlayStation®**  
Official Magazine - Australia

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**SHOUT OUTS:** So long, thanks and  
good luck Naz, we'll catch you at the  
new Casa Del Pattison :: Happy sixth  
birthday Jayde! :: Craig, Melissa & Jay  
Douglas Proctor :: Indiana Jones



# THUD. THUD. THUD. THUD.

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# SCREENSHOT

## OF THE MONTH

**Saints Row 2:** It certainly looks as if Volition is learning a thing or two from its betters, but competition is going to be damn fierce this year. *Prototype*, *Mercenaries 2*, *Just Cause 2* and *GTAIV* aren't going to make it easy.







■ Prison sex. You're either in the posse, or you're not



■ "Drop the gun buddy, and your pants – I've been in jail for a *long* time"



Gaming's latest and greatest...

# BUZZ

**PS3 Slim and Lite** a possibility? *Home* gets a makeover, new *Call of Duty 4* maps, dirty, dirty rumours, and much, much more...

## SLIMMING DOWN

**A**fter releasing a number of different SKUs for the PlayStation 3, rumours coming directly from Sony Europe, from our sister mag T3, have stated that a PS3 Slim and Lite is currently in the works.

But before we get into this we'd like to make two things perfectly clear: firstly, the images on this page are not official, they are purely artist's impressions; and secondly, Sony has not confirmed the existence of the PS3 Slim and Lite as fact, and actually dismissed it's existence as "rumour and speculation".

Apparently, however, according to some Sony insiders based in the UK, Sony is already working on a

new slimline PS3, scheduled to be in stores by the end of 2008.

While we're sure that a slimline PS3 is in the works (when has Sony *not* released a slimmer version of its consoles? Answer: never) we believe that the end of 2008 is an overly optimistic estimate. The cost of the individual components required to build a PS3 is still relatively high – and considering the added cost of shrinking these components down, an affordable PS3 Slim and Lite may not be possible as of yet.

That being said, there's no reason not to believe that Sony engineers aren't already looking into slimming down the chunky PS3 into something more manageable.



## SIZE MATTERS...

History states that the PS3 will eventually slim down, at some point. Here's a look back at the Sony's obsession with size.

### PlayStation

PS sells craploads, new updated girly version (with 'shexy' curves) continues the trend.

**Verdict:** Metrosexual



### PlayStation 2

The original PS2 gets de-chunked by it's slimmer, more attractive cousin. Dodgy disc tray though.

**Verdict:** Workmanlike



### PSP

PSP gets makeover, no-one notices the difference (except Japan, who buy craploads of the things)

**Verdict:** Easy-Japanesey





# FEELS LIKE HOME

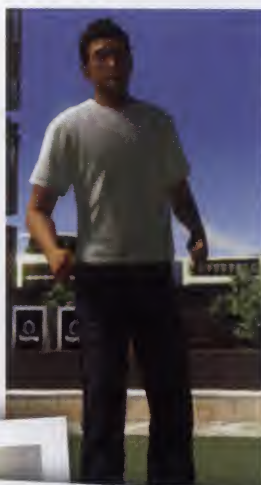
It's been a while since we've had any new info on *Home*, but out of the blue we received some up-to-date screens of Sony's online service that promises to revolutionise how we socialise online.

Looking like a mixture of *Facebook* and *Second Life* (times a million) *Home* continues to look more and more polished each time we lay our eyes on it. What's becoming increasingly obvious with each new screenshot is the insane level of customisability, with regards to your home itself and your avatar/character.

Interiors can be fitted with all

different types of furniture, and for the ladies (and the fellas, if you're into that sort of thing) it's even possible to change the shade of lipstick you're wearing. Awesome... we guess.

And it all just looks so good. Like *The Sims* decided to go on a big night out, and got tarterd up in some sexy new textures, with high-res make up. But while we're pleased with the aesthetics of the whole thing, we want to know more about how the whole thing works. As soon as we know, you'll know – guaranteed.

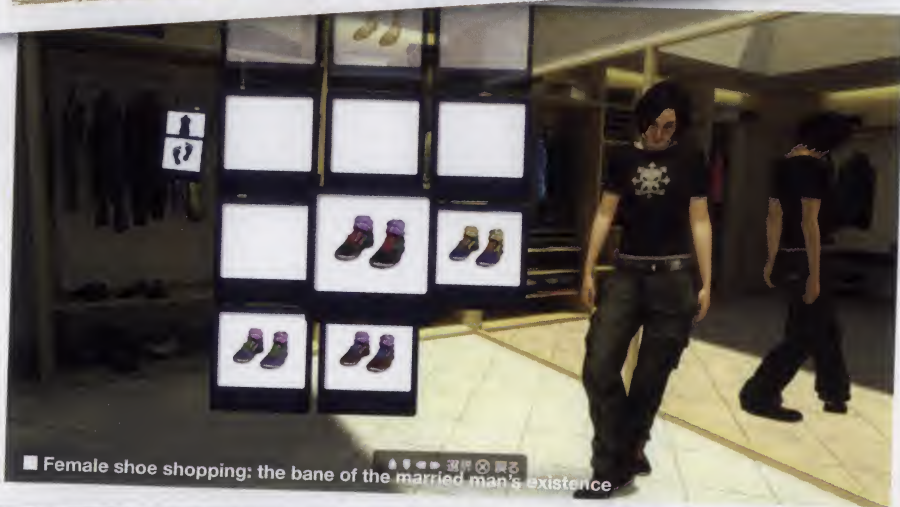


■ Ah... to be 'spinning bird' kicked to death by those oddly arousing monstrosities...



■ This guy's pants are 'stretch to fit'

■ This was based on Ken Kutaragi's actual house (Disclaimer, this is not based on Ken Kutaragi's actual house)



■ Female shoe shopping: the bane of the married man's existence

## STREET FIGHTING MAN (AND WOMAN)

Although the *Street Fighter* franchise has seemed to devolve into a bizarre and uncountable number of sequels, sub sequels, and God knows whatever else, we can't help but slowly build up enthusiasm for the upcoming *Street Fighter IV*. It's looking more and more like a *Batman Begins*/*Casino Royale* style reboot for the franchise – and we like that sort of thing.

Re-affirming this belief once more is the recent announcement that all eight of the original *Street Fighter 2* cast are returning for the fourth edition. Note the incredible, yet somehow alluring, thickness of Chun Li's thighs, and Zangief's beyond manly chest rug. Oh, and Dhalsim's still stretches. Awesome.

### WHAT'S HOT AND WHAT'S NOT...

#### Wet T-shirts

This is Vegas, we applaud you...

#### Pixel Junk Monsters

Stay away from my babies you bastards!

#### Using the Force

Darth Vader is a P.I.M.P – recognize, bee-atch!

#### Splitfish

PS3's custom mouse – we're unconvinced.

#### Chun Li's thighs

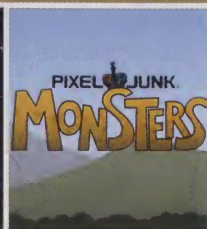
Those things are frickin ENORMOUS!

#### Stupid Ratings

Just give us *Dark Sector*. Is it really THAT bad?

#### Sky Diving

Stupid SIXAXIS controls ruin another game...



HOT!

NOT!



BUZZ

# INFO NUDGE

Prodding you in the ribs with all the latest newsbites...

## ESSENTIALLY SNAKE...

For those poor unfortunate souls who have never had the pleasurable Snake experience, Konami recently announced the imminent release of *Metal Gear Solid: The Essential Collection*. This collection of essentials includes the original PSone classic *Metal Gear Solid*, as well as the PS2 stalwarts *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* (director's cut – whatever that means...) and *Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence*. No idea on a release date for Aus, but the game will be hitting the US in March.

## BUZZING

For those of you who love to 'buzz' and feel and intense need to Buzz on the move, Sony recently announced the upcoming release of *Buzz!* for the PSP. Playable for up to six players, and featuring over 5000 questions this addition of *Buzz!* doesn't seem to skimping on any aspect as it gets shrink wrapped into UMD. The PSP edition will also feature six new rounds specifically designed for the PSP, one of which is 'Quickfire Challenge' – call us psychic, but we have a strange feeling speed may be of the essence in this round...

## IN THE ZONE

If you require any assistance with regards to purchases of the 'gadgetey' variety, or just like to read about things you couldn't possibly afford, then you could do a lot worse than visiting [gadgetzone.com.au](http://gadgetzone.com.au), Australia's latest resource on all things 'gadgetey'. With all the latest news and reviews of all things tech, [gadgetzone.com.au](http://gadgetzone.com.au) is the best source of info for those who like to be on the cutting edge of technology.

## MOUSE IN THE HOUSE

The Splitfish Frag FX controller is a solution for all gamers who prefer to use mouse-and-keyboard as opposed to the traditional controller. Effectively using a mouse instead of a second analogue stick, all other buttons, including the triggers and 'home' button are present. Even SIXAXIS motion sensing is present in the nunchuck-esque analogue controller. We had a quick test, and after getting used to it, it controls quite well – with only some unresponsive triggers letting it down. Well worth a look however, especially for those used to PC gaming.

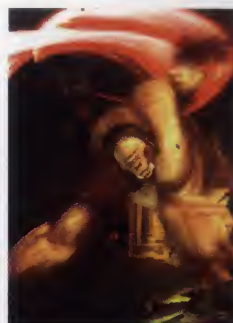
# DIRTY, FILTHY RUMOURS...

It's merely a rumour at this early stage, but there's apparently a good chance that *God of War: Chains of Olympus*, currently a PSP exclusive, will be making it's way across to the PS2 at some point.

Considering the success of both *Liberty City Stories* and *Vice City Stories* on PS2, logic states that Sony would be crazy not to port *Chains of Olympus* across to the PS2 – and when you consider that the game reportedly pushes the PSP hardware to the limit, the game could probably be ported directly to the PS2, with no tune ups, and still look better than most games on the market.

PSP owners can be consoled by the fact that a port of the current PSN network champion, *Everyday Shooter*, is also reported to be in the works for Sony's handheld in due course.

And yet another rumour doing the rounds on the interweb states that Capcom is currently in the process of developing *Dead Rising 2* – for all next gen platforms. We were actually a bit disappointed that the original *Dead Rising* never made it across to the PS3, but if Capcom see fit to bring the next instalment of the franchise to the PS3, then we'll totally forgive those cats for their discrepancies.



■ Kratos: man... god... lover... pyromaniac



■ The very definition of an 'eyesore'



■ Rockets or elaborate tubas: you decide...

# DUTY CALLS

Not that it needs it or anything, but the spectacular *Call of Duty 4* is being 'freshened up' with some new downloadable content – in the form of new maps.

New maps will "thrust gamers into a hot zone of added combat across a variety of intense multiplayer locales," says Activision, giving as little away as possible with regards to the finer details of the locales in question. That being said, Infinity Ward's Community Manager Robert Bowling claimed to be "excited about the new maps, and the added gameplay variety" – and that's good enough for us.

The minute we get info with regards to dates or details, we'll be sure to let you know.

# SO YA WANNA BE A BOXER?

Wanna be the champ? So you ya wanna be a fighter... in the golden ring? Hopefully you guys remember the sheer attack of awesome that was *Bugsy Malone*, else this whole sentence will be rendered mute.

But we digress. EA has now released info on their upcoming slog-a-thon *Facebreaker* – an arcade style boxing game in the vein of *Ready to Rumble*. Featuring vibrant cartoon characters, and more accessible, pick up and play vibe compared to... say, *Fight Night Round 3*.

Featuring Romeo, a boxer prone to "pelvic thrusts" and Molotov (a "demolitions expert" from Russia who fights dirty) amongst others, *Facebreaker* looks like a fun, light hearted return to arcade fuelled action. Look for a more in-depth preview soon.





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XBOX 360

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## BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Boobies in games: they seem to be becoming more prevalent these days. Back in the day the female form was represented by a handful of pixels and that was it. Nowadays the polygon count is off the charts, aided by cutting edge 'jiggle' physics focused in the chestal region. Adam even suggested last month that it was only a matter of time before 'nipple' physics made an appearance into game design – ones that would miraculously extend and withdraw depending on how cold it was in the game.

Is it all getting a bit ridiculous? Probably. Especially when the boobies are so ridiculously huge that they defy all laws of physics. Does it affect girls though or, more to the point, do I have a problem with it? Well, not really, especially since most of these girls are too unrealistically endowed for any girl to aspire to – and in any case why would any girl want a heaving pair of *Soul Calibur*-esque boobies in the first place (think of the back pain).

But maybe we *do* need some maturity...

Jessica Greene, Games Writer

## THE GRAN PRIZE

Whereas Japanese PlayStation 3 owners have had the absolute pleasure of purchasing and playing *Gran Turismo 5: Prologue* for, well absolutely ages, us pathetic gajjin westerners have had to wait, with our thumbs a-twitchin' for a release date,

Well, thankfully there is now progress – Sony have confirmed that Europe will see a release date by the end of March, hopefully by the time you're reading this mag. Since us Aussies tend to be bundled in with Europe on the downloadable content front, we'd expect to be playing *GT5 Prologue* at around the same time.

Oh, and while you're playing, spare a thought for those poor Americans who have to wait until the middle of April (if they're lucky). Then feel free to laugh out loud in triumph. You lose US and A!



Canary yellow, arguably for nancy-boys

## SKATE IN 08?

Okay, so everyone and their mother knows that we at OPS adore *SKATE*, with an unhealthy passion. Still to this day, in spite of the plethora of games we could try our hand at, we often find ourselves returning to this finely tuned masterpiece.

So when we heard that a sequel to *SKATE* was already in the works, we were pretty happy. This feeling of happiness transformed into full blown delight, however, when we heard that the game was scheduled for release in the fiscal year of 2009. 2009, you say?

That's aaaaages away...

But... you have to bear in mind that the fiscal year in the US is actually between April 2008 and March 2009, so there is a very good chance we may see *SKATE 2* before Christmas this year.

We hope, however, that EA doesn't turn *SKATE* into the kind of franchise that's marginally updated every year, like *FIFA* or *Madden*. EA has made a great start to what could be a legendary franchise, we hope they don't take this success for granted...



Gravity: it blows

## ORIGINAL AND BEST?

As for as many people are concerned, the legendary *Grand Theft Auto* series was born on the PlayStation 2. But that game was called *Grand Theft Auto III* for a reason buddy – it was the third in the series you numbnuts...

But pretty soon all excuses for GTA ignorance will become null and void, as Sony look set to bring the first two top down, non-three dimensional, *Grand Theft Auto* games to the PlayStation Network for download.

It's merely an unconfirmed rumour at this stage, but we feel that as a precursor to *Grand Theft Auto's IV's* impending release at the end of April, Sony would be crazy not to take advantage of the hype.

Look for these games to be released before, or around, the month of April.



Look at that guys bone structure... flawless





**GOD OF WAR**  
CHAINS OF OLYMPUS



Strong violence,  
Sexual  
references

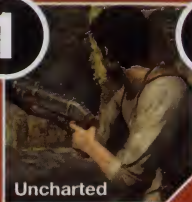




# TOP 10

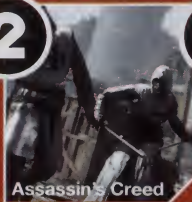
## GAMES CHART

1



Uncharted

2



Assassin's Creed

3



Call of Duty 4

Rank	Title	Category	Distributor
4	Guitar Hero III	Rhythm	Activision
5	Ratchet & Clank Future	Action	Sony
6	Need for Speed ProStreet	Sports	EA
7	Heavenly Sword	Action	Sony
8	FIFA 08	Sports	EA
9	Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	Action	Atari
10	MotorStorm	Racing	Sony

## RELEASE SCHEDULE



Format	Title	Category	Distributor
--------	-------	----------	-------------

### EARLY 2008

PS3	Haze	FPS	Ubisoft
PSP	Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	Sports	Atari
PSP	FiatOut: Head On	Racing	Activision
PSP	N+	Puzzle	Atari
PS3	Turning Point: Fall of Liberty	Action	Atari
PSP	Downstream Panic	Puzzle	Atari
PSP	Metal Gear Solid: Graphic Novel	Manga	Atari
PS3	Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	Racing	Sony
PS3	Grand Theft Auto IV	Adventure	Rockstar
PS3	Metal Gear Solid 4	Action	Atari
PS3	Enemy Territories: Quake Wars	FPS	Activision
PS3	Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	Action	Activision
PS3	Tom Clancy's EndWar	RTS	Ubisoft
PS3	Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway	FPS	Ubisoft
PS3	Condemned 2: Bloodshot	FPS	Sega
PS3	Viking: Battle for Asgard	Adventure	Sega
PS3	Army of Two	Action	EA
PS2	Godzilla: Unleashed	Fighting	Atari
PS3	NFL Tour	Sports	EA
PS3	Conflict: Denied Ops	Action	Atari
PS3	Rock Band	Party	EA
PS3	HEIST	Action	Atari
PSP	Riviera: The Promised Land	RPG	Red Ant
PS2	Tales of the Abyss	Action	Sony
PS3	Alone in the Dark	Action	Atari
PS3	Midnight Club: Los Angeles	Racing	Rockstar

## TOP TEN: IDLE ANIMATIONS



1

### Outrun 2:

Chillax at the start of a race and the chunky flag man busts out some official Japanese callisthenic exercises and then moonwalks his fat, chubby arse off screen.



2

### Half-Life

If you sit there holding a Snark the bugger will eventually try to escape. Alternatively Gordon would poke an index finger near it and it'd attempt to chew it off.



3

### Earthworm Jim

Jimbo would sometimes play with his blaster only for it to go off in his face, leaving a scorched stump – also he'd use himself as a jump rope or a lasso.



4

### Tomb Raider: Legend

Lara does very some sensual stretching to stay limber. At this point most mouth foaming fan boys reach for the moist towel.



5

### Catwoman

Shite game, but the idle animation is a softcore playboy shoot with Halle gyrating and licking her leather gloves while the camera swings around at fan service angles.



6

### GTA: San Andreas

CJ sways from side to side and sings a few bars of a random hip-hop song if left to his own devices. There are at least four different variations, but probably more.



7

### GTAIII

If you stood in the middle of the street in front of city traffic they'd honk at you, at which point you'd wittily respond with a one finger salute.

8

### Rugby League 2

On the main menu, your player flips the ball around like a globetrotter, then does a "what are you doing or waiting for" pose.

9

### Crash Bandicoot series

Crash plays with a yo-yo or bounces a Wampa fruit up and down (often ending up with a face full of Wampa from above).

10

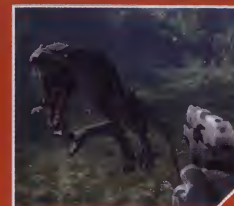
### Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

Nathan peers around, checks to see if his shoulder holsters are still carrying his guns. He eventually takes a knee and has a quick snooze.

## WINNERS

From the comps in OPS #13

**Burnout Paradise:** Graeme Avison, Jack Barnett, Ned Fraser, Ben Haebich, A McMullen, Sam Markham, J Franklin, M. Hamilton **Turok:** Neil Taylor, D Kennedy, Kris Harringer, D McVey **Top Gear:** T Balistreri, J Barnett, D Martin **Raw is War:** K Bishop. All other winners notified by email.





# FACE YOUR FRIENDS ON THE FAIRWAY!



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# COMPS

## HOW TO ENTER

Send entries to [ops@danventhoward.com.au](mailto:ops@danventhoward.com.au) with the name of the competition in the subject line, or post them to OPS Magazine, PO Box 1087, Bondi Junction, NSW 1555 with the name of the competition CLEARLY MARKED on the envelope. Alternatively head to [www.gameplayer.com.au](http://www.gameplayer.com.au) for details. Include the name of the competition, your name, age, email address, contact number, and more importantly, your full address and postcode! All competitions close on March 28. All competitions are open to residents of Australia and New Zealand.

## ONE MOMENT IN TIME...

**Time is a funny thing.** Every now and then there's a defining moment that essentially changes the course of human history, to the extent that things are never the same again. We call this moment a *Turning Point* (pfftt... best intro ever!) which is coincidentally the title of Atari's latest alternate universe game.

*Turning Point* takes this idea of an important moment of history (in this case Winston Churchill being hit by a cab and surviving) and flips the outcome (that is, Churchill gets accidentally killed). This results in a complete alternate view of history where the Nazi's conquer Europe, and invade New York. This is where the fun begins.

Playing as Dan Carson, a construction worker with no military experience, you must survive this invasion as best you can. Playing in Locations such as Washington, London, and (of course) New York, this game looks set to present a fresh new take on the World War II shooter.

We have 10 copies of the game to giveaway, and all you must do to enter is answer one simple question, and send it to us marked 'Turning Point giveaway', following the instructions above.

**Question:: Who was the British Prime Minister before Winston Churchill?**

- A Maggie Thatcher
- B Neville Chamberlain
- C Tony Blair

**WIN!**



## AIN'T NO SUNSHINE...

**WIN!**



**Imagine a city,** positioned in such a way that in the peak of winter there is no sunlight for 65 days... Pretty scary huh? Imagine if, during said period of complete and utter darkness, said city became infested by a plague of vampires? That would be a sound case for pooping in your pants – correct? We certainly think so...

This is the premise of *30 Days of Night*, a groundbreaking comic book that was subsequently adapted as a movie starring Josh Hartnett and Melissa George. The movie is just about to come to Blu-ray, and guess what? We have a bunch to give away.

This gets complicated, so listen up good. The first prize in this illustrious competition will receive an insane amount of booty including: a *30 Days of Night*, hardcover comic book set signed by creators Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith.

There have only been 2000 of these created world wide, so this really is a 'money can't buy' prize. In addition the winner will receive a copy of the the movie on Blu-ray, as well *Apocalypse Now*, *We Were Soldiers* and *Alpha Dog*.

Runners up (of which there are nine) will each receive a copy of *30 Days of Night* on Blu-ray and a sweet *30 Days of Night* T-shirt.

But what, you ask, must one do to enter this amazing competition? Well, simply answer this simple question, and send the answer to us marked '30 Days of Night giveaway', following the instructions above. Do it!

**Question: 30 Days of Night producer Sam Raimi was responsible for which legendary cult horror series?**

- A Hellraiser
- B Nightmare on Elm Street
- C Evil Dead



# JUST LIKE JESSE JAMES

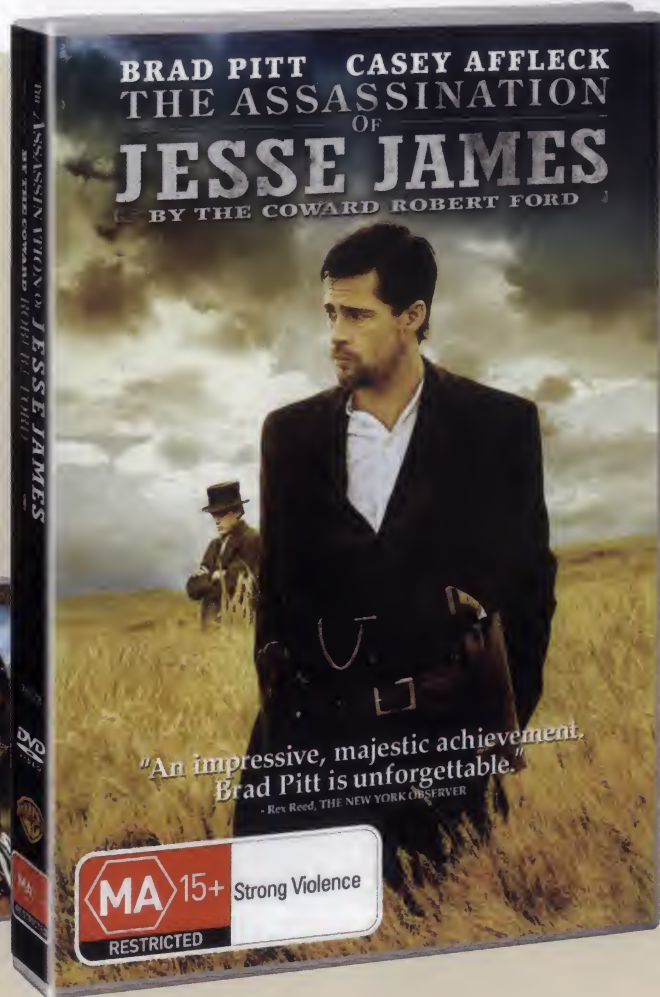
**The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford** is an epic movie that's almost as long as its epic title, but don't let that put you off – it's one of the best movies of 2007. Detailing the final days of Jesse James as he slowly moves away from the robbin' and a-stealin', it's possibly the best Western since *Unforgiven*, featuring some unforgettable performances.

Brad Pitt cuts a haunting, ominous presence as Jesse James, but Casey Affleck steals the show as the nervous, stuttering Robert Ford, who idolises James initially, yet comes to resent him as he struggles with paranoia and feeling of inadequacy.

We have 15 DVD copies of the *The Assassination of Jesse James* to give away, as part of a 'Brad Pack' that also includes *Interview with the Vampire* and *Troy*. All we need is a simple answer to a simple question, and your in with a shout. Send your answers to us, following the instructions on page 20, under the headline 'Brad Pack giveaway'.

**Question: Casey Affleck is the brother of which major Hollywood star?**

- A Brad Pitt
- B Matt Damon
- C Ben Affleck



## BLOODY HELL...

**Condemned 2** puts you back inside the twisted mind of Ethan Thomas, a former Special Crimes Unit investigator who has seen and done it all – and by 'done it all' we mean killed over 200 people.

The events in the previous game have left Ethan a quivering, hollowed-out, alcoholic mess, suffering from hallucinations. Now a homeless burnout, Thomas has been dragged kicking and screaming back into the police force, in an attempt to help track down a former partner.

*Condemned 2* may look like a first-person shooter, but it plays a whole lot differently. Ammo is never prevalent, and the player will often have to rely

on whatever blunt instrument is nearby to take care of enemies.

We have 10 copies of the game to give away and, as always, all that's required of you, the reader, is that you provide an answer to the simple question below, and send to us under the headline 'Condemned 2 giveaway', following the instructions on page 22.

**Question: What was the full name of the original *Condemned* game?**

- A Condemned: It's Clobberin' Time
- B Condemned: Criminal Origins
- C Condemned: Hard Times, Daddy





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Have your say and win big!

# LETTERS



■ We guess now probably isn't the time to ask one of them to make us a sandwich...

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

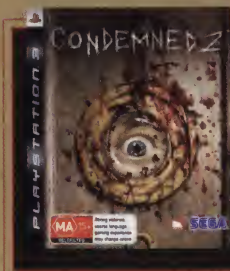
### MEN ARE STUPID: FACT

I've just been reading your magazine and I was just wondering if you would consider including some himbos in the next edition as the mag is getting a little sexist. I realise that most gamers are guys and men drool over even the smallest hint of bikini clad babes, but enough is enough. I'm sick of picking gaming mags only to find some half naked chickie advertising a product or game. I know that you all wish that this mag was a porn mag but, sorry to say, it isn't. Also it would be good to see more articles written by women instead of one tiny well written little fluff piece you have deemed to include in you mag. Could you give Jessica two pages to review a game every once in a while instead of just the 'Bird's Eye View' every month?

Shanelle, via email

Man, are we on the defensive this month. Instead of ignoring the few negative letters we receive, we prefer to address them in the mag, since we

feel there may be others who feel the same way. The fact is that two of our recent covers were for street racing games, which tend to be fronted by bikini-clad women. But we have it on good authority that Nathan Drake is a 'hottie', so when Uncharted 2 comes around we'll be sure to try and get some pics for the cover art. As for Jessica doing more work, fact is she's just busy doing other things. When she gets some more time, we'll try and get her to write more reviews.



## WINNER!

Letter of the month wins a copy of *Condemned 2*. Beat poor people up with blunt objects!



■ Assassin's Creed: You're allowed to like it, you know? We do

## HONESTLY

Firstly, I would like to say I am a big fan and I'm sorry that my first email to you guys is on a negative note. I am unsure if you have heard about an incident where an online game reviewer of a very popular website was fired for giving a game a bad review, but this is a great example of what my email is about: bias in game reviews. I enjoy your magazine a lot but I have to ask if there is any connection between Assassin's Creed winning game of the year and your apparent support from Ubisoft printed on the front cover of your next issue. I understand you get advertising from game developers but shouldn't the people who buy the magazine and support it come first? Again I am sorry to question your credibility and hope you don't take too much offence to my email.

Aussie, via email

No problems Aussie – you make a good point, and one we're only too happy to answer. We base our reviews solely on how much we enjoy the game and nothing more – advertising has nothing to do with our review scores. Assassin's Creed was our game of the year (a difficult choice considering the quality of the competition) due to the fact that most of our staff felt it was the best design achievement in 2007. Feel free to disagree with that, but it was our belief, influenced not by Ubisoft or any other game company, but by our own preferences. If everyone had their way there'd be no such thing as a poor review – and we've had plenty of those.

## BOOBIES BAD?

Hey guys, I thought I'd write in and voice an opinion that might seem a bit fruity. My problem is the representation of female characters in many games. I know, I know, what guy doesn't want to see some hot chick running around in a string bikini-

esque outfit whilst beating the crap out of bad guys? That was good. Nowadays the formula of skinny women with no muscles to speak of kicking arse with their double E's bouncing everywhere, has been taken completely out of proportion to the point where instead of just admiring the eye candy, I can't help but sigh at how ridiculous it's become. There's a place for this nonsense, it's called softcore porn. And I for one don't want to see gaming walk hand-in-hand with it.

Nick, via email

I know it probably seems like we can't stop talking about boobies, and at times this may actually be the case, but we understand your point completely. There is a place for this sort of thing, and we're guessing it's probably not videogames. That being said, what's good for the goose is good for the gander, and if other forms of media are given a pass for this sort of exploitative semi-nudity, there's no reason why videogaming should be singled out. In actual fact, the kind of stuff seen in games is nowhere near as bad as what's on prime time TV.

## AWESOME

I love reading your mag. I read it every month, cover to cover, then again. I spend two whole days drooling over your terrific pages of brilliant jokes and stunning one-liners, then I have sleepless nights for the next month waiting for the next issue. Just one problem though, I often find that I'll read something particularly good, but when I go back to find it again, I CAN'T FIND IT!!!! My suggestion is that you put a glossary in the back of your mag, with references to all-important stuff. That would be awesome. Not that you're not already awesome.

Alex, via email

Here's the deal Alex. Our awesome is at

# CUTTINGS

Delicious bite-sized letter morsels that are easy to swallow and won't ruin your dinner. They're like Milky Ways you can read...



# MARK CHEWS THE FAT WITH CONDEMNED 2'S ETHAN THOMAS...

**Ethan:** Hey man, how's it going?

**Mark:** Oh, just great, another bum here to hassle me for my 'hard earned' cash. Why don't you leave me alone and get a job, you smelly hobo?

**Ethan:** No man, it's me Ethan, from the upcoming game *Condemned 2*, you're supposed to be interviewing me remember?

**Mark:** All right, all right, fine... I'll give you some. How much money will it take for you to piss off, you bloody dole bludger? How money much do you want ya flamin' mongrel?

**Ethan:** Um, how much does a can of VB cost in Australia?

**Mark:** Um, about three bucks, I guess... maybe?

**Ethan:** Well, that oughta do I guess. But I really am the guy from *Condemned 2*, honestly. Here look at this mag (hands him copy of latest *Official PlayStation Magazine*).

**Mark:** Bloody hell dude, you're looking a bit rough.

**Ethan:** Well, yeah. But anyhoo, about that three bucks – can I have it?

**Mark:** Oh I don't know, you're just going to spend it on booze aren't you?

**Ethan:** Yeah, well what were you going to spend it on?

**Mark:** Um... booze?

**Ethan:** Yeah, so hand it over you chump!

**Mark:** Fine... (under breath) you bludging hobo bastard...



such an intense level, that to list every single piece of awesome in a glossary of some kind, would be such a long winded process, and take up almost as many pages of the mag itself. What if you were to keep your own glossary of awesome? Would be a workable solution?

## THE LUCKY COUNTRY?

Firstly, got to say what a great magazine you guys are producing I especially like the feature in the Christmas issue of how to get onto the Japanese Playstation store, which leads me to my next point. Why, in an age of globalisation, does Australia always get the raw end of the stick when it comes to technology? By the time we get the latest gadgets and gizmos a new model is introduced overseas, just look at how long it took the PlayStation to get to Australia. And when it did we didn't get any choice, America got two or three different models – what did we get? One model, then it was replaced by a cheaper, not quite as good model, and I consider myself lucky I got a 60GB model as I find the memory card slots and extra USB slots really convenient. Which finally brings me to my point. With a game as huge as

Gran Turismo 5 is surely going to be, why is *T5 Prologue* is available to buy on the Japanese website and we can't even get the demo on ours. It seems Sony don't really care about Australian customers.

**Caine, via email**

*First off Caine, congratulations on your impossibly cool name, it's Biblical yet makes you sound like a tough guy. Good balance there. Now, onto your point – yes, Australia often gets the wrong end of the stick when it comes to release dates, usually due to the fact that Australia is a tiny market compared to the US and Europe. However, if you check news this month you'll find that we Aussies are actually going to get the GT5: Prologue*



■ "Man, I'm never going to make McDonalds breakfast! Damn it all!"

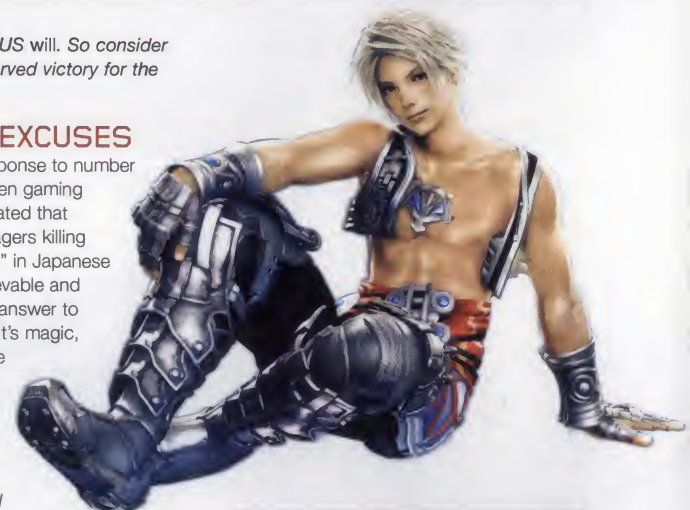
demo before the US will. So consider that a small, deserved victory for the lucky country.

## EXCUSES EXCUSES

I am writing in response to number three in your top ten gaming bullcrap, which stated that metrosexual teenagers killing "big-ass monsters" in Japanese RPGs was unbelievable and stupid. I have the answer to your conundrum. It's magic, dipshits. Of course metrosexual teenagers would most likely choose to learn magic in an RPG such as *Final Fantasy*, and since characters like Vaan in *FFXII* are little metrosexual sissies, they perfectly fit the description of someone who could use said magic. Oh, and MAGIC RULES!

**Alexander, via email**

*This is merely one of the six emails that Alexander sent us, all with different reasons why metrosexuals could, in fact, kill "big-ass monsters". The other reasons included: they are secretly demons like Dante from Devil May Cry, they are secretly superheroes, and (possibly our favorite) they use steroids. All legitimate reasons big fella. We stand corrected.*



## SPEAK TO US

Love the new mag? Hate the new mag? We want your opinions and questions on *OPS*, on games – on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:

**OPS Feedback**  
Derwent Howard PO Box 1037  
Bondi Junction, NSW 1355  
ops@derwenthoward.com.au

## STOP SHOUTING!

WHEN WILL *UNCHARTED 2* BE RELEASED? I MUST KNOW RIGHT NOW!!!

**Anonymous loud guy, via email**

WE DON'T KNOW!!! STOP SHOUTING AT US LOUD GUY!!! WE'RE GUESSING AROUND CHRISTMAS 2009!!! WE DON'T MAKE THE GAMES, WE JUST WRITE AND BITCH ABOUT DEADLINES!

## STRIP TEASE

If you put this in the cuttings section, I'll strip.

**Alexander Garner, NSW**

*Do it Alexander, do it. We're calling your bluff. Will you really strip? Wil you? Now you have to send in a photo of your naked body. On second thought. Don't. Did we make you just win a bet or something, because we want in.*

## LET THEM HAVE CAKE

Just wondering – who's wife/girlfriend made that awesome PS3 cake, and did you eat it?

**Jaradith Hintz**

*We'd like to use this platform to publicly thank Luke's wife Nicole Reilly for the awesome cake, we all ate it – with the exception of Mark who had the day off. Apparently his 'cake radar' was off.*


## LET THEM HAVE CAKE

Who would win out of all you guys in a cage match to the death, and why?

**Matthew Davies, via email**

*It's hard to tell: Naz has got the 'pizzazz', Luke's got the 'look', Phill's got the 'skillz', Mark's got the... um, shark, park? Ok, so nothing rhymes that good with Mark. Luke's the tallest, and his dad used to be a bouncer, so he wins.*





Does anybody remember *Root Beer Tapper*? You should, it was rad. But imagine *Root Beer Tapper* in three glorious dimensions, and the reward for your lightning bartending skills is the arrival of three buxom babes just begging to be... squirted. With the post-mix hose. Woooo! Wet T-shirts!

That's *This is Vegas*. *Root Beer Tapper* with tits. Actually, it's a bit more than that.

### Jiggle Physics

Describing *This is Vegas*, at least superficially, is fairly easy. It's 'National Lampoon Presents: GTA Las Vegas' (with jiggle physics). It is, however, the lazy, option. The open-world space is bigger than the *GTA* series itself and there's plenty of scope for unique spins on the rapidly burgeoning genre. *This is Vegas* takes a new tack, which is commendable. Comedy and fun are the major focus, and the usual violence for violence's sake takes a back seat.

Our experience so far with *This is Vegas* is limited, but we've seen the game in action and there's quite a bit to report. The set-up is unsurprisingly cheesy – you'll arrive in Vegas with \$50 and no real connections to speak of. Your life, at this stage, will boil down to serious benders, frequent strip club visitation and mucho gambling. Unfortunately, some stuffed-shirt wants to 'take out the trash', so to speak, and turn the city of sin into a family-friendly



# Viva Vegas

Words: Luke Reilly

Ever wanted to host your own wet T-shirt contest? Midway is listening with its new spin on the open-world sandbox adventure. It's GTA meets Ocean's Eleven meets National Lampoon in this sordid, stylish and slapstick tale of excess in the city of sin – **This is Vegas.**

holiday town – and it's up to you to ensure that doesn't happen.

## *Guy Behind The Guy, Behind The Guy*

Who you arrive in Vegas as, however, will be completely up to you thanks to a robust character customisation tool. More to the point, when you arrive in Vegas you'll probably be suitably impressed. It's instantly recognisable. There aren't any 'real' casinos in the game, but the parodies of actual Vegas casinos more than suffice. We were shown inside one and the interior was quite remarkable, red rugs lined the polished floors, banisters were gilt with gold and slot machines and gaming tables were everywhere you turned.

We were in the casino to make a quick load of cash, specifically by playing blackjack. Developer Surreal has

implemented a cheat system to give you a distinct advantage. While you're playing blackjack in *This is Vegas* you can use a pair of special sunglasses and a marked deck to 'aid' you. When cheating, cards will be marked one of three ways – high, medium and low cards. It doesn't guarantee a win, but it certainly makes it a lot easier. The one catch is the pit boss – if he's watching you, you're screwed. The casino we were busted in wasn't the old-school type either, these guys tried to shoot us. You'll need to get used to that on you way to becoming the guy behind the guy, behind the guy.

## *Hot Buzz*

The coolest part we noted was the partying aspect to *This is Vegas* – something we gather will make up a significant part of the game. We saw some pretty early melee combat, street racing and a simple shootout (and we had a quick glimpse of our main character escaping some cops, who incidentally, looked more like strippers), but the party aspect seems to be the most fleshed-out at this stage. It's also the game's main point of difference.

Dancing in clubs formed a very small part of the galactic-sized offering of GTA: San Andreas, although *This is Vegas* expands on the concept considerably. In our demo the club our character arrived in was a tad quiet. It would be up to our character to change this – to build some 'buzz'. Dancing is a rhythm-based game – the combos are presented on screen for you to perform, and the better you nail them the more revellers you'll attract to the dance floor. Our favourite was the 'Travolta'. We mentioned the bartending minigame in the intro – you move back-and forth along the bar, pouring beers, lighting cigars and knocking out drunks, and success is rewarded with the aforementioned impromptu wet T-shirt contest and a six-pack of waterlogged chesticles with glossy nipples. Dealing with party poopers is the other way of getting your party on, although this is just an extension of the melee system.

## *Vegas, Baby!*

We'll be bringing you plenty more on Midway's ambitious *This is Vegas* but, for the time being, turn to our exclusive interview with Alan Patmore, studio head of Surreal, for more on this bad boy.



# So Money

**OPS** talks turkey with Alan Patmore, studio head of Surreal, about guns, gambling and male strippers...

**OPS:** What kind of research has gone into the game? How many trips to a 'massage' parlour can you explain away as 'research' before somebody at Midway starts asking questions?

AP: Heh, heh – we did do quite a bit of research, actually flying down to Vegas. Mostly an environmental art research gathering expedition, so we'd go down and take pictures of all the streets, from the seedier areas to the big

an open world game in the form of Las Venturas in *GTA: San Andreas*?

AP: Well, first of all it was pretty far into the game of *San Andreas*, you know, that was an enormous game. I think it was like hour 30, or something like that, you actually get to their version of Vegas and then, honestly, I felt that it was really light. It really didn't do Vegas justice and it didn't capture those crazy Vegas moments and the heart of Vegas – it was just a location basically. So we really felt there was an opportunity to explore and all the unique elements of Vegas in the gameplay.

**OPS:** The real Las Vegas is commonly known as a "two-day town". How do

casinos, etcetera. We actually got a lot of access to 'on floor' casinos, so we got some very realistic looking locales and it really allowed us to fill the world out.

Also we just talked to a lot of people when we were down in Vegas. The best guys to talk to are actually the cab drivers – they have all the craziest Vegas stories and that's really something that we're trying to capture in this game, those crazy Vegas moments. When you talk to the cab drivers they give you all the good dirt so a lot of those stories became inspiration for some of the plot lines in the game.

**OPS:** What made you choose Vegas as the setting, given that it's already been represented in

you plan to keep gamers interested in the virtual Vegas?

AP: Well, first of all you're not having to actually drink when you play this game! Part of the two-day town is that I think the human body can only last that long in Vegas because it takes so much abuse! When you're playing the game, obviously the story is what really drives you through the experience. It is a very big game, we don't know exactly from an hour standpoint, but it is a long game and there's a lot to explore – but it's really the story that drives you





through the experience and keeps you going, and it's really one of the unique parts about this game.

**OPS: Has the gun-based combat evolved much since May 2007? How much of the combat will be weapon-based?**

AP: Yes, it has evolved, that was a really early demo – we just got the player shooting a gun and the AI didn't really know what to do, so they would run at you with fists! We've got the world simulation to react really coolly to the player with a gun – that kinda goes to tonally how we're handling it also. Guns are not a huge part of the game. Since this is a sandbox-style game we're really allowing the player to choose when they want to use guns, but from a story standpoint and a tone standpoint we're not a thug-based game so it's not as if we're giving the player a rocket-launcher and saying, "Okay, go into the middle of the street and blow up as many people as possible." The guns are always wrapped into the context of what you're doing at any given time, and the world and the police response will react to the player if they do pull out a gun. So, let's say you're in the middle of a casino and you're just kinda doing your thing and you whip a gun out – security's gonna come in on you, people are gonna flee, freak out and run for cover. Then again, it's

kinda fun to play with the world sim, and poke the sim with weapons, which are a tool to do that. Tonally, we're kinda playing it a little different, because we don't have blood in the game. We have these stylised hit reactions where you're actually seeing clubs and hearts come off a person when you punch them, and that's gonna translate to guns as well, so when you shoot someone there's not gonna be blood – there'll be a cool graphic representation of them getting hit. We're also gonna have

**been hard to get away without using weapons like that, but is it something that you guys would've preferred to not tackle, considering Danny Ocean never carried a gun and it seems a little at odds with the rest of the game's crazy hijinks?**

AP: Yeah, we talked about that early

people react in more amusing ways, so instead of a really graphic headshot if you shoot someone in the butt they jump around and yell at you, so again, tonally much more humorous than other open-world games.

**OPS: We guess with GTA owning the genre and what gamer's expect it probably would've**

on but then we actually chose [to include them] as the game came together. Guns, as I mentioned before, became this tool in your tool-belt to play with the world sim, and, from a story standpoint, there are several situations when you're going around the darker, underside of Vegas where it did make sense to have a gun. But again, it's all up to player choice. There are some players that will get through certain situations without using a gun and there are some players who will

## What Happens In Vegas...

...stays in Vegas, but here's a look at a few things Sin City is famous for.

### ELVIS

Legend. Between 1969 and 1977 Elvis performed over 1,000 times in Las Vegas and on tour. Las Vegas is the only town on Earth where you can get married by an Elvis impersonator and it's normal.

### SIEGFRIED & ROY

Performed crazy shit with tigers and things for a few decades until a white tiger bit one of them (the smaller one, we think) in the neck. He survived, they retired and (perhaps, unnecessarily) later announced they were gay.


### MOVIES

Swingers, Ocean's Eleven, Honeymoon in Vegas, 3000 Miles to Graceland, Casino... er, Striptease – the list goes on and on. It's just a great place to set a flick. Except for Vegas Vacation – what were you thinking Chevy?

### BLOWING UP CASINOS

Most recently, the New Frontier was reduced to rubble with a controlled implosion in November 2007. It had operated since October 30, 1942, and hosted Elvis' first Vegas performance.





choose to use a gun more often – we're really letting the player determine what type of player they want to be.

**OPS:** Was there a deliberate effort to make something more light-hearted with this game, after the comparatively dark and disturbing *Suffering* games?

AP: Actually, no. We really felt that with *Suffering* one and two that one of our strengths was really creating a believable world – believable fiction. So that's what we wanted to do with Vegas. Now, the fact that *Suffering* was dark was really something that we embraced for those titles because it was a horror game, but again for us, from a design perspective, it was all about creating a believable environment, and that's what we're really trying to do with Vegas. So it didn't really have a direct correlation to *Suffering* being so dark, it was just the evolution of what we feel we do well.

**OPS:** Can you elaborate on how the 'suit' system works in regards to the gameplay?

AP: Sure, essentially we have the four suits within the game, which are four factions. They all have their own personalities, agendas, etcetera. Throughout the game there are a series of gigs that are 'suited', so within the environment you'll see gig markers and you'll have the ability to do these gigs for these various suits. When you do gigs you'll earn reputation within the suits, and by earning reputation you unlock more gigs and more locations and more Easter eggs, outfits – things that will help you progress through the game. So basically, by building your reputation within the suits you're unlocking the world of Vegas for yourself.

You'll have access to the entire strip from the start of the game, but you might not be able to get into a certain club until you've reached a certain reputation within a set suit, that sort of thing.

**OPS:** From what we've seen of the game so far, it really seems like you're nailing the humour, which is an element that most GTA-style games lack. Who have you got writing the game?

AP: I think humour is one of the things that we're doing exceptionally well with this game and the sole reason is because of Jay Pinkerton, who was the editor of *Cracked* magazine. He's really done a great job. Really, the vibe we're trying to capture was *Ocean's Eleven* – sort of that cool, hip, slick Vegas vibe – meets any Will Ferrell movie – so *Anchorman* or *Talladega Nights*,

you know that frat-house humour that's popular right now, and he's done a great job doing that.

**OPS:** We hear that it's possible that buildings 'under construction' in the retail release may become downloadable content down the track for players to explore. Could you elaborate a little on this?

AP: Yeah, we built the entire infrastructure of the game to support DLC. So one of the things we wanted to do, and we don't have specifics of exactly what we're working on right now, but it was important for us from a development standpoint to architect it from day one with that in mind.

**OPS:** The open-world genre is always a tough nut to crack – what is it that *This Is Vegas* has that will get it over the line? You can say wet T-shirts...

AP: I really think *This Is Vegas* is an evolution of open-world games; it's not a thug-based game, so tonally it's totally different than anything else out there. It's contemporary, it's hip, it's cool, it's funny – all those things really do differentiate it. When you do get into the story, it's not even just the humour but the situations you're in, the cast of characters that you're interacting with throughout the course of the game, all these things really do differentiate this title from other

open-world games with tend to fall in that thug genre. It really gives the player, somebody who's tired of doing the same old thing, something fresh and new – you know. You're not beating up hookers and stealing their money or assassinating people – you're doing really cool, fun Vegas activities. Beyond that, from a core mechanics standpoint, from a gameplay standpoint, I think we're offering something really new in terms of what the pillars of the game are. We've got fights, everybody's fighting in open-world games, but our combat system – we based it off *Bully* and *The Warriors* – is really deep,

**OPS:** Is there really a mission where you get to be a male stripper?

AP: Yeah, it's one of the craziest things! There's a character called Joey – he was the guy in the demo who was saying his corpse would be in a porn movie – and he takes you on a series of misadventures. It's a really funny situation. ♣

*"I think humour is one of the things that we're doing exceptionally well..."*

## On The Cards

Nevada, the home state of Las Vegas, was the first state to legalise casino-style gambling in the US, although not before it reluctantly became the last state to outlaw gaming in the early 1900s.

On October 1, 1910, an extremely strict anti-gambling law became effective throughout Nevada, which even banned the custom of tossing a coin for the price of a drink.

The Nevada State Journal newspaper reported, "Stilled forever is the click of the roulette wheel, the rattle of dice and the swish of cards."

Forever lasted around three weeks, as gamblers quickly set up underground games and illegal but accepted gambling flourished until 1931 when gambling was once again legalised.







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# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-60  
■ **RELEASE:** LATE 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY  
■ **DEVELOPER:** INSOMNIAC  
■ **WEB:** [www.myresistance.net](http://www.myresistance.net)



■ "Hey guys did you watch *Two and Half Men* last night? That Charlie Sheen – he's such a cheeky little scamp!"

## RESISTANCE 2

The single most anticipated FPS for the PS3?

**H**ere's the thing about *Resistance: Fall of Man* – it's awesome. Now to a lot of you this is old news. You've been beaver away at the map packs, playing multiplayer matches and even finishing the single player mode on hard, insane and swift-kick-to-the-nuts difficulty level."

The thing is we, as an elite, special ops, super secret force of reviewers and vampire hunters,\*\* haven't had the luxury of kicking back with this choice human vs. mysterious monsters FPS, 'pwning' people while eating pizza on our respective couches.

Were that the case you'd be reading a magazine comprised of crudely drawn crayon squiggles of male and female anatomy (which was actually how the original review of *Lair* looked but 'The Man' couldn't handle it!) and misspelt swear words. But we have to play the new games and review 'em so our memory of *Resistance* was a little foggy.

### RESISTANCE ISN'T FUTILE

Some games age well, some seem dated

almost as soon as they come out, and some have an almost timeless quality. *R: FOM* has that latter accolade – soon after loading the single player mode we were charging nests of Chimera, lobbing those spiky grenades and swearing at those toothy mongrels as we gave them a one way ticket to alien/monster hell!

One thing we all agreed on was that we kind of wished the downloadable content wasn't just multiplayer maps but more single player missions. See, when you get down to it the FPS will often have a short, perfunctory single player game. Even if it doesn't, even if it has a pretty kick arse single player game – and *R:FOM* does – once it's over... it's over. Sure you'd replay it at least once to unlock more weapons but overall there's a sense of loss when that final cut scene plays, as you know your next game will be against someone called 'BeefyTits-123' rather than the sly menace of the Chimera.

### MORE BANGS FOR YOUR BUCK

Information on *Resistance 2* is limited but very exciting. Because this time you



■ Remember Johnny 5 from *Short Circuit*? That's what this guy spreads on his toast in the morning

don't get one single player game you get two! Okay, stop running around with your underpants on your head for a second and we'll explain.

The first campaign, thankfully, continues Nathan Hale's adventures. Hale wasn't the most chatty chap but he made a solid video game protagonist even if he had the personality of salt-reduced tofu. Anyway, it seems that Hale gets into the aircraft we saw at the end of *R:FOM*, heads off to Iceland and meets a bunch of folk who are resistant to the Chimera virus, just like him. These genetically lucky





■ Calling a chimera 'four eyes' is not an insult, it's merely fact. Call him 'eight eyes' and things get nasty...



■ "HEY EIGHT EYES YOU'RE STUPID! Haha! Um, sorry! I was only KIDDING! I was only KIDDING!"



folk form a task force called The Sentinels. Before he has a chance to sit down and have a barbie with his new mates the base comes under Chimera attack. The Sentinels escape and are just in time to see a full-scale aerial invasion of both the east and west coasts of America. You just knew they were going to America at some point.

#### AND THE OTHER CAMPAIGN?

The other campaign is even more exciting. It features at least two players locally, and can have up to eight with multiplayer and is "objective based". This probably means it won't feature lengthy levels like Hale's adventures, rather focussing more on blowing up bases, freeing hostages and so on. This is just conjecture, though. As Insomniac is keeping pretty quiet about this potentially awesome addition. Other barely mentioned additions will feature in

the multiplayer modes – characters have different classes. A beefy bloke with a chain gun, a Special Ops class (which will likely be a sniper or similar) and a medic with a Medicator gun that heals rather than hurts. Sound familiar? Yes it is a lot like *Team Fortress 2*. But then again *TF2* rocks the spot, so we won't be losing any sleep over that.

#### WHAT ABOUT THE MULTIPLAYER? TELL ME, DAMN YOU!

Oh that, yeah, that's going to have up to 60 – that's six zero baby – players in USA-set maps! Sixty! Can you even imagine the carnage? The scale? The sheer size the maps must be to even consider coping that many players? It truly boggles the mind.

Other bits of business will include more vehicles, improved AI for the Chimera (who weren't exactly thickies



in the first game) and boss fights will be more important than ever before. This is grand news for boss fans (like your humble previewer) and will hopefully give us an ending that isn't the usual 'destroy the [generator/big machine/radioactive isotope] so everything explodes real pretty-like' that seems to end every single bloody FPS. Insomniac has made a few other mysterious comments like, "A lot of focus will be put on the aerial nature of the attack". Does that mean Hale or you and your mates will be airborne? We don't know. And don't go around the net saying you heard it here. You didn't. It's a guess. But think about it for a moment. That would be so cool. Anyway, that's all the information we could squeeze out. Believe us when we say we'll get you all the good oil on this one. *R:FOM* was a friggen launch title. They've had time to really develop a PS3-friendly sequel. We're expecting a contender for game of the year.

\* Not a real difficulty level.

\*\* Yeah, that's bullshit too. Sorry.

— Anthony O'Connor

#### INFO BYTE

Insomniac has mentioned that there will be a much more visual presence on the net, with players having their own personal blog-type things where they bang on about *Resistance 2*, most likely.

#### CO-OP COOLNESS

Since the game is still quite a way off you might want to form squads of eight now. This will require a rigorous testing procedure, after all you don't want a dud on the team. So make sure by the end of the year you have seven PS3 owning friends (or four that could double up) that have played the original *Resistance* to make sure they don't suck. If they do, well, they can be the cheerleaders. Or feed you orange slices at half time.



#### BOTTOM LINE

The first one was amazing.

60 player multiplayer

Look, this is going to rule!

OPS is...

Dancing for joy





# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-16  
■ **RELEASE:** TBA  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT  
■ **DEVELOPER:** GEARBOX  
■ **WEB:** [www.gearboxsoftware.com](http://www.gearboxsoftware.com)



■ "Take cover in my privates!" (awkward silence)  
"Errr, I mean, take cover privates"

## BROTHERS IN ARMS HELL'S HIGHWAY

AC/DC sadly not included...

In many ways, the way in which war is treated in videogames is unacceptable. Masquerading as tribute, more often than not it's a lame excuse to make a cookie cutter shooter that could be set in any time, with any background story. The fact that the game is set during the most pivotal conflict of the 20th century, and possibly human history, becomes arbitrary.

It's the difference between, say, *Saving Private Ryan* and ultra-violent tosh like *Windtalkers*. The difference between treating your subject matter with the reverence it deserves instead of exploiting it for your own ends.

Thankfully *Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway* is firmly entrenched in the camp of the former. Just from a short conversation with Randy Pitcher, one of the founders of Gearbox, it was easy to comprehend just how important it was for the team to be as faithful to grim realities of World War II as possible.

Ultimately, *Brothers in Arms* is not just another FPS—in the best sense of the word it's a game about war itself.

### REALITY BITES

In other words, reality is a really big priority for Gearbox with *BIA*. Of all the WWII shooters that populate the market, the *Brothers in Arms* team undoubtedly treat the subject matter with the most respect, and attempt to reproduce both the aesthetics and feeling of WWII encounters as faithfully as possible.

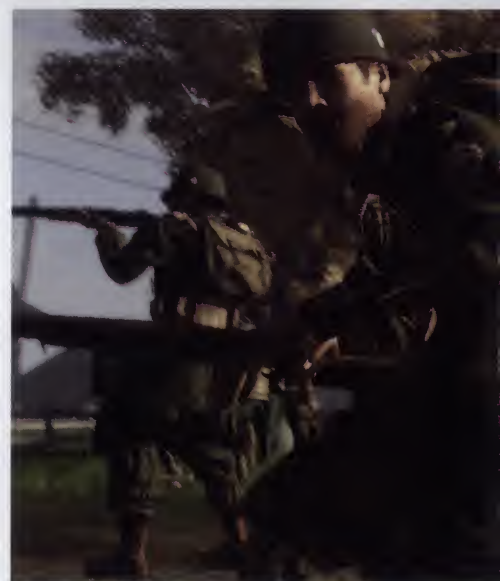
As part of this design mandate *Brothers in Arms* has a health system that helps deal with the issue of realism in the FPS, grounding it in a way that no shooter has previously.

Because while most games have moved on from the previous '100 points of health deteriorating until 'ye be dead' and onto the constantly re-recovering health system seen in, well... every FPS on the market, Gearbox is taking a slightly different approach.

Basically when an enemy begins firing they initially attack via 'cover fire', and when this happens your screen will slowly begin to reflect the fear and panic that occurs when you are being shot at, directly or otherwise. This is reflected by

a slight onscreen colour change on the HUD, and an increasing haziness around the edges to reflect the way soldiers physically react to being fired upon. When this occurs you essentially have a short window to find cover before the enemy has time to really line up an accurate shot thereby killing you.

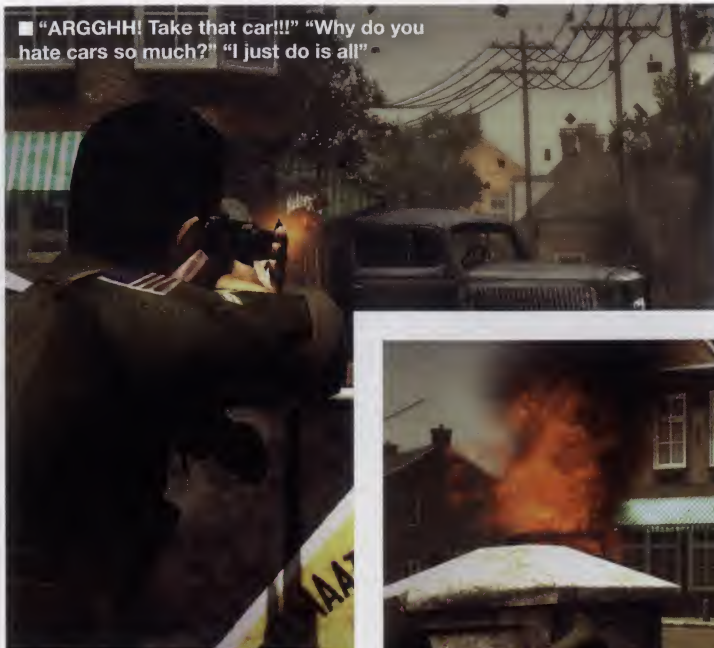
Essentially the system works in a similar way to most FPSs, but the framework is slightly different and grounds a traditional game mechanic in reality.



### ■ Hitler's secret weapon: invisible Nazis...







■ "ARGGHH! Take that car!!!" "Why do you hate cars so much?" "I just do is all!"



■ "Yo Kapowski?! You got any moisturiser?! I'm chafin' over heeere!"



■ "Where's that grenade I just took the pin out of? Oh - there it is!" (BOOOOOOM)

"[Gearbox] attempt to reproduce both the aesthetics and feeling of WWII encounters as faithfully as possible."

#### VICE VERSA

If you've ever played a *Brothers in Arms* game, you'll know that it works similarly in reverse, utilising a cover system that distinguishes the franchise from the rest of the herd. For example, when firing on an enemy they will immediately go into cover, giving you, or your team-mates, time to flank them, and pump their guts 'fulla lead' as they cower, trembling for their very existence.

It's an excellent mechanic that transforms the feel of the game. In addition it forces players to use the team at their disposal to overcome obstacles. Basically, deploying your team and using

them to provide cover fire enables you to gain ground and attack the enemy.

As self confessed 'noobs' we slowly became adept at using our team to create diversions, but watching some of the more experienced testers in action gave us a more accurate idea of just how well the system works.

Switching effortlessly between three different fire teams we watched in awe as the player tore through those dastardly Nazis in droves. The balance was evenly split: half the time was spent taking down enemies the old fashioned way (point and shoot) and the rest was spent tactically organising your subordinates.

#### TACTICAL... UGH!

But wait; don't shrivel your nose in disgust just yet. *Brothers in Arms* is not the kind of tactical shooter that has you blandly organising troops in a pedestrian fashion with an overly complicated control set up. On the contrary, moving your troops is as easy as pushing **W**, and even manoeuvring between three different teams is as simple as toggling via a simple button press.

It's a simple system, and one that veterans of the likes of *Rainbow Six Vegas* should be able to quickly come to terms with. It requires a little more thought than *Call of Duty*, but still remains accessible. It's typical of the *Brothers in Arms* series - a series that combines historical accuracy, and accuracy in general, with fresh gaming mechanics designed to elevate the franchise above and beyond the slew of shooters plaguing the market of late.

These tweaks, as minor as they may sound, result in *Hell's Highway* feeling different to any other shooter on the market - and that can only be a good thing. With *Medal of Honor* in decline and *Call of Duty* moving in a different direction (and swapping eras), *Gearbox* seem to be the only team bringing something fresh to the World War II shooter - and it shows in every aspect of production. We eagerly await the final results. **Mark Serrels**

#### BOTTOM LINE

- Cool game mechanics
- Destructible environments
- Hurry up!

OPS is...  
in the shit!



#### STRANGE BUT TRUE

War stories: generally solemn tales of death and misfortune. But here are a couple of more bizarre tales from the annals of WWII...



#### WAKEY WAKEY

During D-day, one of the reasons the Nazis were defeated was due to the fact that tanks couldn't be deployed against the beachhead without Hitler's permission. He was asleep at the time, and no one was permitted to wake him.



#### MURKY WATERS

King George VI, in an attempt to save energy for the war effort, demanded that no one fill a bathtub with more than five inches of water. He actually had someone paint lines on each bathtub in Buckingham Palace to make sure.



#### TOILET HUMOUR...

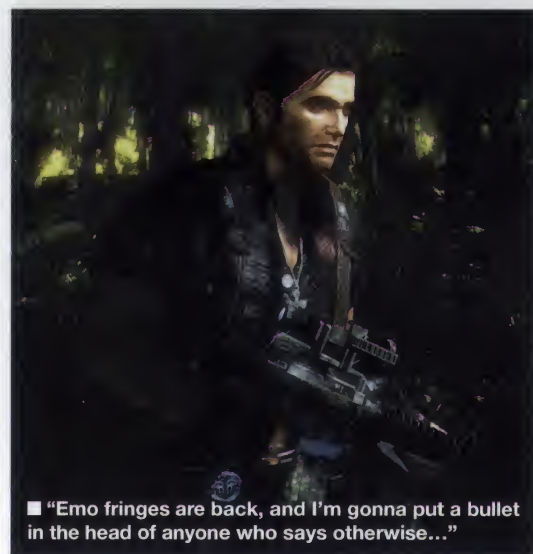
The first German killed in the war was killed by the Japanese, the first American was killed by the Russians - and the highest ranked American killed was killed by... an American pilot. Also, the German submarine U-120 sank as a result of a malfunctioning toilet.



# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ACTION  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **RELEASE:** TBA 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ATARI  
■ **DEVELOPER:** AVALANCHE STUDIOS  
■ **WEB:** [www.atari.com.au](http://www.atari.com.au)

■ Sideburns: sadly overlooked in our beard-obsessed society



■ "Emo fringes are back, and I'm gonna put a bullet in the head of anyone who says otherwise..."

## JUST CAUSE 2

GTA can have the city. This owns the outdoors, BABY!

Rockstar's GTA series hasn't only wowed gamers. It's also wowed execs looking to pick up easy cash by churning out one-titted clones. Hooray then for the brains-and-balls of Eidos and Avalanche Studios. Rather than push out similar second-rate junk it's decided to get shifty in the ring and provide a fresh take on sandbox gaming with its *Just Cause* series. No, it won't knock Rockstar's juggernaut out, but startling as it may seem, you're about to read how we figure *Just Cause 2* will win – at least – a stack of rounds against the ear-biting monolith that is *Grand Theft Auto IV*.

The original *Just Cause* is a game you might not have heard about because it was only released on

PS2 and Xbox 360. Capitalising on pop socialism (the game featured box art inspired by the iconic pose of uni student hero Che Guevara) and the fact that gamers' attention spans are shorter than a Paris Hilton mini skirt, it saw South American man-army Rico Rodriguez bounce and murder his way across an open world with arcade fever.

What do we mean by arcade fever? In games, such as *GTA*, in order to quickly traverse a massive area you'd have to knick a stationary vehicle and hooch away. In *Just Cause* things were different – you weren't a criminal, you were a booty-slaying action god. It was common place for you to sky dive out of plane, open your parachute, use your



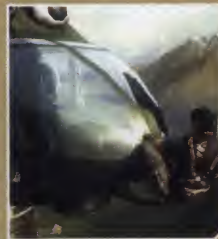
grappling hook to latch on to an enemy chopper, pull yourself into the chopper, hover above a speeding van, then leap into the van, drive it into an enemy camp and shred everyone. Even as PlayStation lads we admit it was sexier than a hot tub session with the Simpson sisters (come on, you have to admit Ashley looks hotter post rhinoplasty). So why wasn't it a chart buster? Sloppy mission design and rough edges ruined the brew.

Fortunately *Just Cause 2* – which is headed to the PS3 – has made it its mission to plug the holes of the first game

while turning the volume up on the series' suicidal antics to 11. Hooray for that.

This time Rico Rodriguez, the returning CIA agent who has bagged more panties than a Bras N' Things factory worker, is commissioned by a hot piece of agency flange to come out of retirement and chase down his former boss, some geezer by the name of Tom Sheldon. Apparently the sly dog has decided to design his own pension plan and buggered off to the tropical island of Panau in the Malay Archipelago with a stack of stolen loot. In all likelihood the

## WHO'S DAT ON MY HELICOPTER?



One of the main areas that developer Avalanche Studios was keen to improve on for the PS3 version of *Just Cause 2* was the game's AI. Now the game is out to make you feel like you're really engaging a wily and dynamic enemy during combat. If you find yourself dangling on a chopper mid-flight you'll have to dodge bullets from enemies who pop out and try to shoot you down. Meanwhile when you take on foes on the ground be ready for them to call in backup choppers or paratrooping reinforcements!



■ Stupid goon. You're dead goon, and it's your own fault for being a goon. I hate you goon. Etc.



## INFO BYTE

Avalanche Studios is throwing all manner of numbers about regarding the content of this game. Apparently it'll feature 1000sq virtual kilometres and over 2000 parts that can be used to upgrade your weapons and vehicles.

his parachute and grappling hook – both mapped to a separate button – he can slingshot himself up into the air to glide around the game's massive real estate at will. Yes, it's complete bollocks, but when this ability also allows you to drop C4 charges on enemies and their installations below, who cares?

On the other hand if you prefer to get around the game in a more conventional way, *Just Cause 2* has you covered as well. From massive 747 jumbos to sports cars, jeeps, and anything that would otherwise require a license, it's promised to feature more vehicles than peak hour.

And it looks like you'll have plenty of opportunities to control them all. Avalanche Studios has promised the game will be massive. The main story will see you go head-to-head with the island's authorities as you team up with renegade factions (if you so desire) and liberate military strongholds on the map. The more you liberate, the stronger your range of influence extends and the more the game opens up. What better excuse to explore the humungous map?

Apart from these main missions, the developers have also promised around 1000 (!!!) smaller activities that you can do to compliment the main story. These serve to increase something called a CHAOS meter that aids you to destabilise the mob in power and help you take out Sheldon.

*Just Cause 2* may not quite offer the buffet of fine delights promised in *GTAVI*, but as far as butt-to-the-glass mayhem goes, we're thinking it'll be hard to top. And cot-damn, doesn't it look sweet!

— James Ellis

**"Just Cause 2 will win a stack of rounds against the ear-biting monolith that is *Grand Theft Auto IV*."**



■ "Ha ha! This is the life! The wind in my hair! A view of God's green earth below me! This is living, right guys! Guys? Hey where is everyone? Where's my parachute? Yep, I'm dead!"

codger is probably going to blow it all on cheap booze and cheaper hookers, but even so the agency wants him six feet under.

Okay, so it's the same James-Bond esque tosh we've been sitting through for years. And it's not even good Bond. More like one of the Timothy Dalton train wrecks. If you want to indulge in a top story you should probably get your ass off the couch and go borrow a book, or something. Whether you like it or not, *Just Cause 2*'s story is just a blind excuse for Rico to bolt around the island killing folk with the same prejudice reserved for picnic ants. And bring it on say we.

It's actually this suspension of brain activity that makes *Just Cause 2* so damn exciting to look forward to. For instance, rather than limit himself to standard gunplay, Rico is also a master of sky-surfing stunts. Using the combination of

## BOTTOM LINE

- Saucy environments. Rrrrrr
- Stunt-astic vehicular CHAOS
- Airy-fairy depth?

## OPS is...

Surprisingly aroused





# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** TACTICAL SHOOTER  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-16  
■ **RELEASE:** MARCH 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT  
■ **DEVELOPER:** UBISOFT MONTREAL  
■ **WEB:** www.ubi.com

## INFO BYTE

*RSV2's* story was written by Lucien Soulban, who (apart from having a cool name and a stack of videogame industry credits) has written extensively for the pen-and-paper RPG industry, primarily for *White Wolf* and *Dream Pod 9*.



■ "All right guys, let's shoot at stuff!" "Pfft... hell yeah man! I love shooting at stuff!" "Oorah!"

# RAINBOW SIX VEGAS 2

Ubisoft heads back to Vegas to take care of some unfinished business...

**W**hat happens in Vegas stays in Vegas, right? Actually, wrong. *Rainbow Six Vegas* was a big success and its sequel is shaping up to be equally awesome – but come the sequel (*RSV2*), you won't be playing *just* in Vegas (not that you did in the first one either, actually).

The game actually runs in parallel with the first *Vegas* game; in fact, it begins before the events in *RSV*, catches up to them at the helicopter scene from the end of that game, and continues on. So you'll have a chance to learn more about the

story, find out why some of the events in *RSV* unfolded as they did, and finally bring it all to a close.

Not that you'll need to have played the first game to make sense of *Rainbow Six Vegas 2*. Au contraire – the design team has worked hard to ensure that *RSV2* is a complete story in and of itself, with the added bonus that if you've played the first title, you'll also get closure on that storyline.

Neat. But what about the game itself?

In truth, the design team at Ubisoft Montreal has concentrated on evolving

the first game rather than a wholesale re-invention. It's running on the same engine but as Vincent Vega would say, 'it's the little things'.

So, for example, you can now sprint, which is very handy when you need to get away from the grenade that just landed at your feet. The cover system has been revised so you can now shoot through plywood, drywall and the like. And some of the weapons – primarily the shotgun and light machine guns – have been tweaked to make them more balanced and more usable.

There are also now team orders for grenades and in fact, a lot of effort has gone into team AI to make sure that your computer-controlled buddies act and react more like special forces soldiers. They move in bounds, provide proper covering fire for each other and should generally cause far fewer headaches than they did the first time around (not that they were ever really that bad).

The storytelling has evolved too. Instead of sitting through cut-scenes, we'll be treated to more vignettes during gameplay itself. The idea has been to



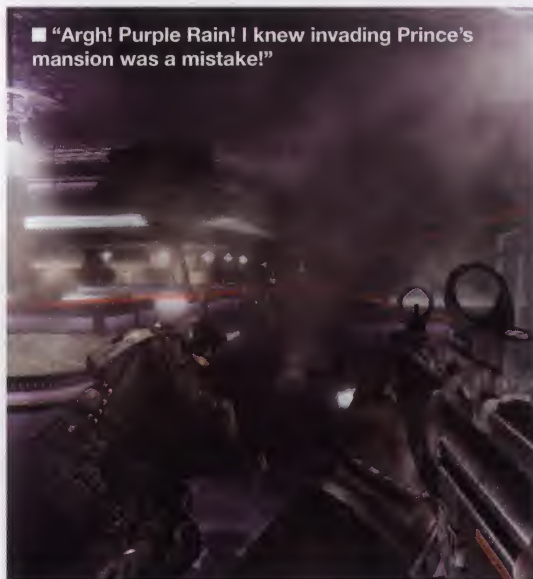
■ You have to ask – was absailing really necessary from the piss poor height?



“Could it give *Call of Duty 4* a run for it’s money in the online stakes? We reckon so...”



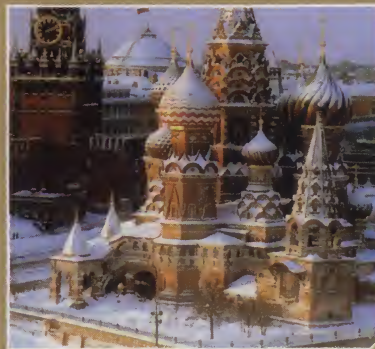
■ “Argh! Purple Rain! I knew invading Prince’s mansion was a mistake!”



■ “Okay, I see... a tree, it’s green. Appears to well maintained, situated in a planter box of some.”  
“Johnson! Useful observations! We talked about this!”



## LEAVING LAS VEGAS



*Rainbow Six* won’t be going back to Vegas, according to the lads from Ubisoft, but that doesn’t mean the series’ travels are over. In fact, they’re big fans of locating their games in real-world locations. The possibilities are endless (well, nearly endless; we doubt anyone would be too interested in *Rainbow Six Dubbo*) and given today’s political climate, you could pretty much pick any city in the world. *Rainbow Six Moscow*... Tokyo... Glasgow... there’s a whole wide world to shoot up!

multiplayer modes: Demolition and Team Leader. Demolition sees one team planting a bomb, then defending it; Team Leader is a variant of VIP; each team has a leader, who must be safely escorted to an extraction point. Only the two leaders have a HUD and once your leader is down, your team can’t respawn (but can still eliminate the enemy leader).

And more importantly, *Rainbow Six Vegas 2* introduces ACES (Advanced Combat Enhancement and Specialisation). It’s a persistent character/skill system that tracks your progress in three categories: Assault, CQB (Close-Quarters Battle) and Marksman.

Advances in each category are awarded for the appropriate kinds of action (killing enemies that are behind cover for Assault, killing someone from behind for CQB, long-range kills and headshots for Marksman, etc.) and unlock category-specific weapons and abilities.

Could it give *Call of Duty 4* a run for its money in the online stakes? We reckon so. In fact, we reckon it’ll give *CoD4* a run for its money all around. If we were the gambling type, we’d even bet on it. **Michael Butler**



make the entire experience a little more seamless to help eliminate the artificial-feeling divide between action and story.

Best of all, the game support co-op play in campaign mode, so you’ll be able to enjoy the Sin City action with a buddy.

### MULTIPLAYER MADNESS

But of course the single-player game is only half the story. The other half is multiplayer. Apart from the return of campaign co-op there are two new

## BOTTOM LINE

Story reaches a conclusion!  
Sweet multiplayer  
Not as tactical as before

**OPS is...**  
Very confident





# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** RACING  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-16  
■ **RELEASE:** MARCH  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** RED ANT  
■ **DEVELOPER:** SYSTEM 3  
■ **WEB:** www.system3software.co.uk



■ Ferraris. They're not just for drug-dealers, you know...



## FERRARI CHALLENGE

Tame an Italian stallion

**W**ant a Ferrari? Like, an actual one? Well, the cheapest new Ferrari will run you around about \$400,000. That's without on-roads and, you know, comprehensive insurance (which, from some limited dicking around with insurance companies, would could run at around \$1000 a month – and that's assuming you're old enough to even bother – that is, born before 1980).

In other words, it just isn't realistic for the common man to really desire a Ferrari – just as it isn't realistic to ever think you'll get a shot at Punky Brewster (the grown-up version, google her – she got hot). No, you just right-click on the image, stash it in a hidden folder and move on.

That's what this game is. A Ferrari spank bank.

In fact, that's probably a little unfair. Actually, it's far more than a digital Ferrari showroom – it's a surprisingly robust

racer. We've just had our hands upon a near-final build and we're suitably impressed. The PS3 has a humble yet decent offering of racing games at the moment, but none of them really fill the closely-contested, pack-racing niche as good as *Ferrari Challenge* seems to.

One thing we noticed immediately was how convincingly the AI-controlled cars behaved. Unlike some other relatively serious racing-sims, not all opponents are created equal. Despite the fact that all cars in the races we attempted were identical, the field tended to spread out by a considerable margin based on driver skill. Drivers became increasingly difficult to pass too – it's far easier to weave your way through a dozen back-markers than overtake a tenacious podium chaser. It's also interesting to note the way the drivers behaved – we could see that some drivers were using different racing

techniques. Some of them would pull noticeably off the racing line, braking harder into corners but exiting them faster.

It's no slouch visually either – the cars themselves are finely-honed and the interiors boast an impressive array of knobs and dials, but our genuine surprise was reserved for the pretty darn spectacular rain effects. Choose cabin view and you'll be treated to rain streaking across your front and rear windscreens, but select the bumper-cam (slung low on the front spoiler), and you'll notice hundreds of expanding ripples as the rain strikes the thin sheen of water coating the entire track. It's an impressive little feat, no doubt.

*Ferrari Challenge* will feature 16-player online racing, 16 tracks and almost every Ferrari ever made – with more to come. We'll bring you our full verdict next issue.

♣ **Luke Reilly**

■ Driving one-handed – massive hit with the ladies (you can still hold hands)



### HORSING AROUND

Ever wondered why both the Ferrari logo and the Porsche logo feature a prancing horse? No? Well, we're telling you anyway. Way back in 1923, Ferrari-founder Enzo Ferrari won a race in Ravenna and met the Countess Paolina, mother of Count Francesco Baracca. Baracca, an ace of the Italian air force, was a national hero of World War I and used to paint a prancing horse on the side of his planes. The Countess asked Enzo to use this horse on his cars for good luck. Enzo did, but made the horse black (instead of red) and added a canary yellow background – the colour of the city of Modena, his birthplace. Coincidentally, a similar black horse on a yellow shield is the Coat of Arms of the German city of Stuttgart, the home of Porsche. Porsche uses the emblem on its logo.



### BOTTOM LINE

Tough AI  
Neat rain effects  
Strictly Ferraris only

**OPS is...**  
observing happily







Jumpi'rat: boing boing!

Surf\_kid: I'm leading!!!

Bscout: 1, 2, 1, 2

Zebra: 3, 5, 8, 33

Zebra: 45, 2, 6, 18

Tieumax: 123 437 870

Taran\_timo: Take 138: ACTION!

Agent007: that was the lat thing u did!

PamPam: What did I do?

AbFab: CUT!

AbFab: we have 2 do it again

CollapsXX: Ooooooops!!!

Bboyzz: To the pool party?

SnowFlakes: Noooo!!! Its all about SnOW War!

BBking: Hey!!!

BBking: we r on the same side!!

Ziggy: Sorry!!!

2pid: I need more balls

Dreama7: PEACE!!!

NoFear: Lets go and jump!

Pinguy: 2 high for me man!

EasyChilly: I'm getting hot in here!

Flygirl08: Put your hand in da air!

THERE'S MORE LIFE AT

**HABBO.com.au**

hangout for teens



# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ACTION  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-TBA  
■ **RELEASE:** LATE 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ACTIVISION  
■ **DEVELOPER:** LUCASARTS  
■ **WEB:** www.lucasarts.com



■ As John 'I'm hip' Travolta might say: It's ELECTRIFYING!

## STAR WARS: THE FORCE UNLEASHED

We felt something... as if millions of gamers cried out for a decent tie-in

**C**all us sentimental old fools. Call us whimsical, cock-eyed dreamers, call us what you will – but we're going on record saying this entry into the *Star Wars* game genre will possibly be a bit of a belter.

Now, we've all been hurt in the past. After George Lucas released his wretched, day-glo, Jar Jar infested prequels, frankly he should have been taken up on (Star) war crimes charges.

We let the Ewoks slide, George, but Jar Jar and Storm Troopers with New Zealand accents?! Come on, son. You've just gone and urinated on our childhood memories. Twice.

But time heals all wounds (apart from decapitation) and with an upcoming TV series – more game journeys back into the *Star Wars* universe was pretty much guaranteed.

### A STAR WARS GAME. WOW, HOW THRILLING [YAWN]

Okay, previous *Star Wars* games have not been great. Actually, most of them haven't even been good. Hell, the best

ones were probably *LEGO Star Wars* and that's just sad when you think about it. But the reason we reckon this one will rock is simple. The mission statement for the title, the entire point of cobbling together this game (that started in 2004, for the record) is, "kicking someone's arse with the Force."

The Force has always been one of *Star Wars'* most esoteric and ambiguous elements. It seems like you could lift stuff up with your mind and – if you're a goodie – get the lightsaber to fang into your hand at the last second. And, if you're on the Dark Side, you can shoot lightning and say, "young Jedi!" a lot.

There has always been a sense that the Force could do a lot more. And it appears that is the very point of *The Force Unleashed*.

### KICK THAT PLOT TO ME, BIG DOG

Set during the mysterious time between *Revenge of the Sith* and *A New Hope* you are thrust into the role of Darth Vader's secret apprentice. And your mission: destroy the remaining Jedi.



■ "May the Force be with you... as I hurl you towards your impending death"



■ Why is this monster wearing a nose ring?  
He's a rebel, that's why

## INFO BYTE

Through its inception the game was, at one stage, about a rebel Wookiee. Lucas put the kibosh on that pretty quickly – but we reckon that would have been a hoot.

■ As good ol' Sean Connery might wittily state: shhhhocking...

Just let that sink in for a second.

Okay, now you're hunting Jedi and that means you're going to need some mighty powers. Happily, Vader seems to be a pretty cool boss as the once restrained Force is now free balling in the trousers of the future. Where once the Force could knock a couple of blokes over and maybe pull the odd ship out of the odd swamp – now you can ram enemies through walls. You can shoot an enemy up in the air, lightning blast his arse and bounce him around like pinball. You can also unleash what can only be described as a force-gasm where everything within coo-ee of your character gets whupped like a mangy dog.

### THAT SOUNDS OKAY, BUT WE'RE NOT QUITE READY TO COMMIT

Okay, that's fair. You can fling folks about in lots of games. How about pulling ships from the air! Or having your lightsaber

shoot around the room, killing all and sundry before landing comfortably back in your hand? How about flinging barrels at an X-wing until it explodes? Or floating over a horde of enemies and speed blasting a rock to crush them to death? Or even moving into force speed mode and hacking up some huge beast so it's dead before it even knows it? You can check out some of videos on the net. The in game footage will quite literally take your breath away..

### YEAH, BUT DOES IT HAVE A PLOT?

This is more of a mystery. You're Darth Vader's apprentice, yet in most of the footage that we've begged, borrowed or stolen you seem to be fighting storm troopers, TIE fighters and such. Not that we're complaining, we've happily been rebel scum in the past and will be happy to be so again. Perhaps at some point

you rebel against Darth Vader. Or maybe he just likes you killing everyone. Or maybe there's something altogether more odd afoot. We know more than we're allowed to tell you at this point (we tried to nipple cripple a guy from LucasArts for information and everything) and it's very tantalising. You can upgrade your force abilities, with Force push, grip and repulse. And of course the sexy lighting-from-your-fingers deal.

Not only that, you can combine said abilities to unleash combo attacks that will cause shock, awe and a shitload of work for *Star Wars* era repair companies (look out for *Star Wars: We have to clean up this Bloody Mess*). You'll also be able to visit various locations like the Wookiee homeworld Kashyyyk, the floral, trippy looking Felucia and the planet of everyone's discarded rubbish: Raxus Prime, Imperial TIE fighter construction facility. Whatever that is.

### SELL IT TO ME, BABY

Look, if the screenshots and videos don't sell it to you, then you're probably a cynic.

## BOTTOM LINE

Amazing, varied graphics  
Similarly impressive powers  
The Phantom Menace. Sigh

## OPS is...

Hoping for a big 'un!

And fair enough too. Lucas has to win us over again. Having said that, what we've seen of *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* actually gave us the tinglies. That feeling you get when you think, "Holy crap, they might have got it right this time!" So we'll keep you updated on this one, but we reckon it's a goer. And we further reckon you guys are on board.

Search your feelings... you know it to be true. ♣ Anthony O'Connor

## OI, C'MERE DESTROYER! I WANT A LIFT!

You've probably seen the immensely awesome trailer for this game. If not go to the website and check it out: an Imperial class Destroyer is floating over a city when suddenly it's pulled out of the sky by your Force powers! We don't know if you can do that in the game, but *The Force Unleashed* may be the most apt title in *Star Wars* history. Now if we could only use the Force on cabs to get home from the pub...





# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ADVENTURE  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **RELEASE:** LATE 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ATARI  
■ **DEVELOPER:** CRYSTAL DYNAMICS  
■ **WEB:** [www.tombraider.com](http://www.tombraider.com)

■ Guns... big guns... must. not. use. breast. punnage...

## INFO BYTE

*Angel of Darkness* also shot JFK, gave birds the avian flu, wrote the script for *Highlander 2* and turned 14% of gamers to stone. Also, eats kittens. For real. We'd never lie to you.



■ Obligatory SIXAXIS balance controls – ACTIVATE!



■ Always with the unnecessary cartwheels...

# TOMB RAIDER: UNDERWORLD

[insert obligatory breast joke here]

**T**its! Let's just get it out of the way right now. Lara Croft has big tits, jugs, cans or jubbles. End of story. That way we won't have to shoot out lame puns and japes about 'raiding her tomb' or 'we'd like to open that chest' or some obtuse reference to exploring her canyon-like cleavage. We're beyond that. But there's the rub (tee-hee): if we're over making big boob jokes about Ms. Croft are we also, consequently, sick of *Tomb Raider* games?

No, actually. Certainly Lara's immense chest puppies draw a lot of attention to the series but while you may come for the norks you'll stay for the gameplay. You've got to remember the original *Tomb Raider* was ground breaking stuff in the realm of third-person titles, with its mixture exploration, acrobatics and combat – it made a big splash. A new IP that still resounds today.

Without Lara we might not have the *Prince of Persia* series, *Drake's Fortune* and even *Assassin's Creed*: all of these awesome titles owe a bit to the *TR* series,

especially in terms of teeth-grittingly hard jumps, trap avoiding and ledge climbing.

The thing is there's been roughly eight *Tomb Raider* titles. They've ranged from excellent: the original and its update *Tomb Raider: Anniversary*. We've had solid entries like *Tomb Raider: Legend*. And then, of course, we've had chapters that made the living envy the dead like *Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness*.

That last title actually caused people to bleed from their eyes and anus. True story. Maybe.

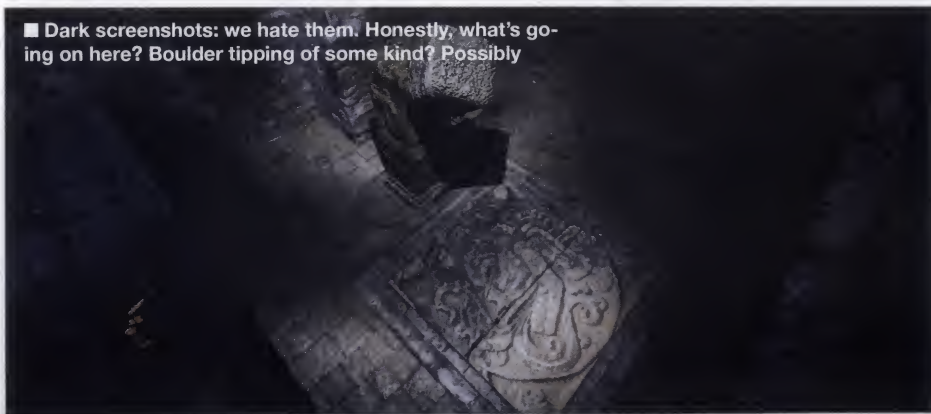
## AND WHAT OF THIS UNDERGROUND?

To be honest, Croft's first dip into the next gen pond is a mysterious entity. A handful of screenshots, a few little demos and an interview with the Crystal Dynamics team has been all we've seen. That could either mean it's a total pile and they don't want folks to know or – and we think this is more likely – they're keeping this one close to their chests because it kinda rules. How can we say





■ Dark screenshots: we hate them. Honestly, what's going on here? Boulder tipping of some kind? Possibly



■ Argh! My tendons! (because tendons hurt when rock climbing, kids!)

■ Dun-dun-dun-dunanananana (that's our attempt at circus music – 'cause, you know, she's walking a tight rope... like in the circus? Ah, forget it then...

## BOTTOM LINE

- Next-gen raiding of Tombs!
- It looks awesome
- Can it compete with Drake?

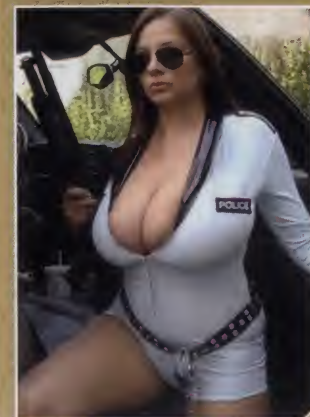
## OPS is...

Busting out



## OH LARA, SHE SO PRETTY

It's hard to imagine how good Lara might look in this next-gen adventure. Questions spring to mind like: will she still be wearing those little shorts? How big will her breasts be? Will there be a breast mechanic for realistic jiggle-time moments? Will there be a sexy catfight in the 'Land of Jelly' where they fight and tear at each other's clothes and... uh... what were we talking about again?



a game rules with so little information? It just makes sense. Ever since Core Design was given the arse because of *Angel of Darkness* – which, incidentally, caused cattle mutilations and two headed piglets to be born – Crystal Dynamics took over and saved the series.

### WHY SHOULD WE GET EXCITED ABOUT THIS?

It's a good question. After all, *Assassin's Creed* has pretty much set the standard for climbing, clambering and leaping on and off stuff, with *Drake's Fortune* just behind it. If *Tomb Raider* on the PS3 just provides better graphics but the same game mechanic it's just not going to cut it. Happily, Crystal Dynamics seems aware of this fact and has a mission statement that, "[they] want to give the player a truly next gen experience." In fact the folks at Crystal Dynamics reckon they've pressed reset and are building this new entry from the ground up. The acrobatics that Lara can already do are going to be massively increased, as will her combat

options and also the way she explores her surroundings. The developer has asked the question: "What makes a great *Tomb Raider* game?" and has then tried to imbue this entry with those elements.

### SO WHAT DOES MAKE A GOOD TOMB RAIDER GAME?

*Tomb Raider* is a 3D game with a surprisingly 2D mentality. You know those old school games where you die if you get hit, fall down a hole or accidentally sprint off the edge of a ledge? *Tomb Raider*'s always been a bit like that. It usually takes you into a massive area, often blocked by some huge doorway with loads of moving parts, and a bunch of enemies – ranging from humans to dinosaurs to irritable badgers and so on – pottering about. You then have to kill the enemies, collect the booty and solve what essentially is a giant puzzle. Which usually involves you clambering up to vertigo inducing heights and jumping on, and pulling, levers, chains or ropes. Now Crystal Dynamics will obviously add variety to this formula

but, in our humble opinion, *Tomb Raider*'s great when you get to a block and think, "How the hell am I getting through this one?" It makes it immensely satisfying to accomplish your goals and you feel like you've really achieved something. So hopefully the difficulty level will be amped up a little.

### THE STORY?

Like most info on this latest raid, plot details are sparse. The developers have said it's a "huge story that will really resonate with the established fans but still provide a compelling experience for first time players." We reckon that means the overall arc that we saw played out in *Tomb Raider: Legend* – with the magic and such – will continue. Which is a good thing. We're pretty confident that this is going to be a good title but we'll let you know for sure in the coming months. We'll keep you abreast of any developments. Damn! Almost did the whole preview with making a tit joke. Oh well, we are who we are, readers. — Anthony O'Connor



# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ACTION  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-TBC  
■ **RELEASE:** APRIL 29 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ROCKSTAR  
■ **DEVELOPER:** ROCKSTAR NORTH  
■ **WEB:** www.rockstargames.com/IV



■ "No, no, no – undo a few buttons on your shirt, like me. What is this, amateur hour? Are you guys sexy gangsters or what?"



## GRAND THEFT AUTO VI

Give me liberty, or give me death!



■ Niko was eager to get into the boot and unload the contraband. Yep, these lava lamps were going to fetch a pretty penny...

**D**-Day approaches. For those of you that have already slapped down some green on a pre-order, your hands are no doubt sweaty with the immense anticipation. The few sorry old stalwarts who maintain GTA isn't really all it's cracked up to be (there are, if the internet is anything to go by, one or two 'special needs' cases who still claim they prefer the likes of *Crackdown*. Just how does one roll their eyes in print?) will be comprehensively silenced.

It's no longer even a case of how good *GTAIV* really is, it's a matter of just how much better it will be than everything else. You could float the USS Enterprise through the gulf between *GTAIV* and its nearest competition.

### INTERGALACTIC TAPESTRY

It's partly this that makes previewing *GTAIV* such a monumentally difficult

task. Rockstar is constantly mindful of its opus being dissected into a series of bullet-points, maintaining there's far more to the overall experience to be had in *GTAIV* than can be conveyed in a laundry list of 'cool shit'. We tend to agree – *GTAIV* is more than the sum of its parts, and that's what makes the package so unprecendently huge. There hasn't EVER been another game like it, so exhaustive is the attention to detail. The problem, however, is that it's all these little things, or more so, the end result of all of them, that paint the most vivid portrait of just how incredible deep and meticulously crafted this game really is.

It's almost too much – there are just so many tiny things weaved together in this intergalactic tapestry. *GTAIV* provides so much of what you expect in real life that, under the combined weight of all these little things, they become almost

unnoticeable. The way your mobile phone interferes with your car radio just before you receive a call, the way your helmet flings off after a stack from a motorcycle, the rumble of a subway train beneath the pavement – all of these are things that could pass by you – that is, until you remember every single tiny quirk was purpose-built to make it feel right.

The difference between *GTAIV* and too many other games of its ilk is when somebody working on the latter says, "We ought to have a sound effect for the ratchet of a handbrake in a parked car" the powers-that-be say it's unimportant. On *GTAIV*, they say it is important.

### HEAD-ON

We could tell you that there will be a whopping 18 radio stations in *GTAIV* – one of which is Russian, and all of which can be accessed outside vehicles





## INFO BYTE

Lonely? Why not go to Love-Meet.net and find your perfect other half in Liberty City. Love Meet... making you whole again.



■ "Trousers! NOW!" "Aren't you gonna read me my rights?" "You have the right to take off your trousers, now punk! Prepare for the long arm of the law!"



using your mobile phone. We could tell you that you can dial 911 on your phone and call in the cops, paramedics or fire department. We could tell you a lot of things, but we risk spoiling the best thing about the *GTA* series – discovery.

### KNOW YOUR PEEPS

Unfortunately for you lot, April 29 is still some time away, but you can still keep yourself in the loop by hopping on the net and checking out some of the new *GTAIV* goodies. Four new trailers will take you on a mini-tour and shed a little more light on *GTAIV*'s colourful cast.

First stop on your Map of the Stars is St Mary's Community Project in South Bohan. You want your stay here to run smoothly? You gotta have an ear to the ground and know what the people are going through. It's a struggle out there, and fighting for the little guy is the inflammatory and outspoken Manny Escuela, ex-gangbanger, resident community leader and activist, bringing you a slice of the downtrodden and opening up your eyes and hearts with a dose of righteousness. Hallelujah brother!

Main man Niko's cousin Roman Bellic gets another look in too. This guy is a Russian's Russian. Loud, obnoxious and hilarious, he's hard to miss with his

flamboyant shirts, fat gut, and the fact that he smells like a distillery. His sweat is about 180 proof.

There are also a few other cats you should keep on your radar. Well dressed, articulate and arrogant, Vlad Glebov will be your best friend – just don't be late on the repayments, or Vlad the Generous becomes Vlad the Impaler, and nobody wants be a sheath to his scabbard, and all that that implies. Francis McReary, an Irish cop, is also dangerous. He enforces his will with his thug of a relative Patrick, who is none too bright, but packs a punch.

Still, the one thing everybody still want to know about is multiplayer. We'll be bringing you the skinny on that the second Rockstar opens the gates again.

✚ Dave Kozicki & Luke Reilly

## BOTTOM LINE

Everything  
Do we need a reason?  
You're kidding right?

OPS is...  
Stoked!



## I'LL DO ONE!

With so many things to do and see in Liberty City, why not take a load off and relax with a brew... or ten. Steinway Beer Garden is your home of beer swilling cultural confusion. It's where Guinness and Steins come together, as they brake for an eye opener on the way to work. If you're spoiling for a beer, a fight you won't remember and don't mind leering at a barmaid's rack, then this is the pub for you.





# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ADVENTURE  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **RELEASE:** TBA 08  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SIERRA  
■ **DEVELOPER:** TEAM 17 SOFTWARE  
■ **WEB:** www.sierra.com

## INFO BYTE

Allan Covert, who was also responsible for the gaming cult classic *Grandma's Boy*, penned the script for *Larry*.



■ What's that white stuff? We don't know, and we don't wanna know...



■ Scoping out the ladies...



■ Cowboys: supergay

## WORMING IT IN...

*Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust* is a bit of a risqué departure for Team17. It's got a rich gaming history, with roots all the way back to the days of Amiga, the 3DO and Dreamcast, and has been responsible for some of our favourite old school classics such as *Lemmings* and the *Worms* franchise. We can't wait to see how well Larry manages to 'worm' his way into Hollywood's seedy undergarments... er, belly. We tried to refrain from the easy 'worm' double entendres, but we're only human damn it!



## BOTTOM LINE

Sex  
Sex  
No nudity?

OPS is...  
Hedging its bets



# LEISURE SUIT LARRY: BOX OFFICE BUST

Giggedy, giggedy, gigg-e-dy!

When it comes to the all-consuming art of seduction, there are several people and iconic characters that spring to mind... Bond, Pitt, Farrell certainly get the girlies swooning, yet all pale in comparison next to the king, the big cheesy, the original ladies man... *Leisure Suit Larry*.

There's something inherently male about Larry that every guy can relate to. It's kind of like catching a fleeting glimpse of a gorgeous young girl's cleavage. We know we shouldn't get fixated or stare, yet there is something written into our DNA that compels us to look, and urge our mates to join in the experience. It's beyond our control (that's our excuse anyway) and, for most red-blooded males, is as natural as breathing. *Leisure Suit Larry* has given us a hero who has unashamedly embraced our supreme maleness and allowed us

to live vicariously through his eyes as he embarks on his series of amorous adventures... and God bless him for it.

Formerly at home on PC and other consoles that shall remain nameless, *Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust*, is our horny little devil's first chance at superstardom in the PlayStation world after previously refused efforts.

If you don't know Larry, there really isn't much to tell. Think of the dorky characters in any teen flick. *Revenge of the Nerds*, *American Pie*, *Superbad*... they're all Larry.

Whatever the premise of the game, Larry wants one thing – booty – and what better setting than Hollywood, where everything, and anything can happen.

After Larry's last effort to get the most out of collegiate life in the banned *Magna Cum Laude*, he's now got his sights firmly (pun intended) placed on the movie

scene. Larry Lovage takes a summer job working on his uncle's movie lot, the original Larry Laffer, doing odd jobs and trying to uncover a mole from a rival studio. And get laid, we guess.

Team17 is promising a return to root(s), while at the same time, creating a sandbox third-person world for Larry and his objects of desire to inhabit, and maintaining a hold of the outrageous comedic farce that has always been the foundation of the franchise. Some situations may require you to have a mass perv around Tinseltown at the new batch of wannabes and add them to your 'to do' list, or helping a porn star find her clothes in her bid to become a legitimate actress. It appears the piss-taking will abound, and we can't think of a better man for the job on than the irrepressible, incorrigible and just downright horny Larry. Suit up!! **Dave Kozicki**



SLIM & LITE

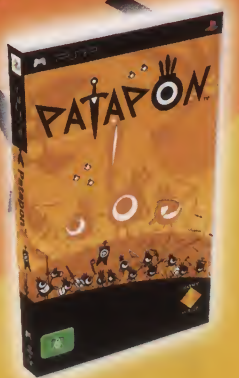
PlayStation®Portable

playstation.com.au

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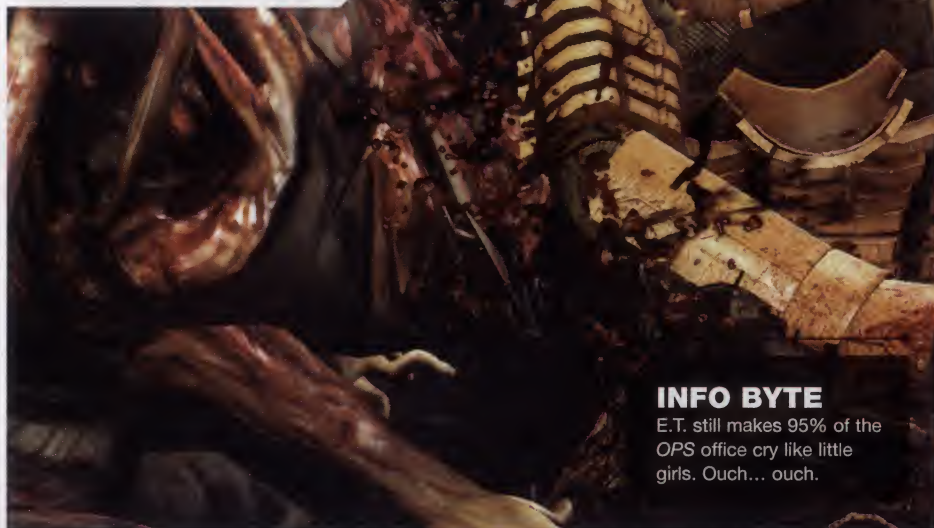
**Give in to the beat**  
As if you have a choice. Using nothing but your rhythm to control an army of Patapons, a life of Patapon induced chanting and foot tapping is just around the corner.





# PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

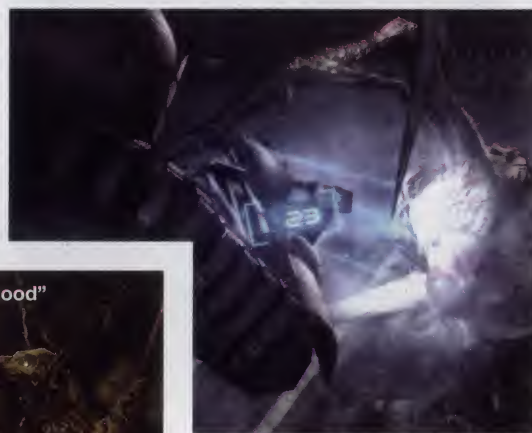
■ **GENRE:** HORROR  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-TBA  
■ **RELEASE:** LATE 2008  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA REDWOOD  
■ **DEVELOPER:** EA  
■ **WEB:** [www.ea.com/deadspace](http://www.ea.com/deadspace)



## INFO BYTE

E.T. still makes 95% of the OPS office cry like little girls. Ouch... ouch.

■ "Hey alien guy! You want a lick on my lollipop of liquid-explodey death? Thought not beee-atch!"



■ "Mum... dad... Papa Jimmy... you guys don't look so good"



## ALIENS HEART OUR ORIFICES

Look, it's been said before but really what's so bloody fascinating about human orifices? Don't get us wrong, we're all hu-man (except Mark, he's Scottish [hides]) and we understand why we like our orifices but they're either probing our bums (the Greys) or making wee alien babies down our throats (*Alien*, *Aliens*, *Alien 3*, etc.). This is a note to all aliens: please, leave our bits alone. You don't see us getting intimate with your space ladies, do ya?



# DEAD SPACE

Not all aliens are friendly. In fact, E.T. aside, they're mongrels!

"In space no one can hear you scream" was the iconic tagline on the poster of Ridley Scott's *Alien*. Since then we've had numerous sequels and bastardisations of this 'Jaws in Space' conceit – which was how Mr. Scott pitched the idea to the studios – and yet, despite the fact that most of us won't actually go there in our lifetimes: space is scary.

It's all black and empty and cold. And, if movies can be believed, brimming with nasty space beasts with a strange preoccupation with human clackers.

Speaking of clackers (wait for it) the plot of *Dead Space* has your company receiving a distress call from a Planet Cracker (see we had a plan all along). Planet Crackers take dead planets and suck the creamy centres out of them, extracting valuable minerals and such.

As you and your scruffy band of

mates board said vessel it seems they may have sucked more than they could take, as an alien menace has made things very unpleasant. Drinks are spilt, no one's rinsed the sink or taken out the garbage – oh and everyone's been infested with an corrosive, flesh transforming virus that make them look like H.R. Giger-esque nightmares.

In a plot that sounds a bit like a pastiche of *Alien*, *Aliens*, *John Carpenter's The Thing* and *Event Horizon*, horribly mutated humans and progressively nastier aliens try to hinder your progress. They also seem to be damn hard to kill as even after dismemberment the parts mutate.

Yes, we have seen this movie 678 times before. *Dead Space's* interest lies not so much in its plot, but the execution: check out the visuals. Rather than go for an original tale it looks to us like EA have decided to steal from the best of them

– creating a very sexy looking collection of genre clichés and giving your character a swanky laser chainsaw thing. It's good for cuttin' stuff up! You also have certain silent sections as you drift through the pitiless vacuum of space.

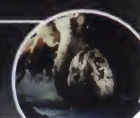
Beyond that, well, the game's not coming out until the end of the year so information is rare. We have no idea if the final version will have multiplayer or co-op capability, but frankly we'd just be happy with a really, really good survival horror game in space. The last good sci-fi/horror game was *The Thing* (which took place directly after the events of the Carpenter movie) and that was decidedly Earth bound (and horribly underrated).

*Dead Space* promises an edgy, creepy atmosphere and will probably ladle on the gore. We don't have much more than that at this stage, but we'll be watching the skies. — Anthony O'Connor

## BOTTOM LINE

Grizzly visuals!  
We love sci-fi/horror  
Generic plot

OPS is...  
Drooling...





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FIRE AT WILL  
FIELD OF FIRE  
STEALTH KILL  
BREACH STEALTH  
ALPHA TEAM MOBILE  
BRAVO TEAM GET MOVING  
HOLD FIRE  
BRAVO TEAM GET MOVING  
MOVE OUT  
SUPPRESSING FIRE  
MOVE AND FIRE  
ATTACK TARGET  
SNIPER

**EVALUATE. PLAN. EXECUTE.**

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK. YOUR BRAIN IS THE DEADLIEST WEAPON YOU HAVE. FOUR SOLDIERS LIVES ARE IN YOUR HANDS. THEY WILL FOLLOW YOUR COMMANDS ONLY. SO MAKE NO MISTAKES. TAKE CONTROL ONE OF NINE SPECIAL FORCES TEAMS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE AND TEST YOURSELF AGAINST THE BEST IN THE WORLD WITH ONLINE PLAY. OR PIT YOUR WITS AGAINST 3 FRIENDS, CLOSE UP AND PERSONAL, WITH AD-HOC MODE. HOWEVER YOU PLAY YOU MUST ALWAYS EVALUATE THE ENEMY, PLAN YOUR ATTACK, THEN EXECUTE WITH PINPOINT ACCURACY. REMEMBER, THE BEST OF THE BEST ARE IN YOUR HANDS.



Moderate battle violence



[www.socom-hq.com](http://www.socom-hq.com)







# IN SPACE NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM



# ONE CAN HEAR CREAM...

... but your poor neighbours will — as you experience *Aliens: Colonial Marines*, a reinterpretation of the sci-fi classic. Converting James Cameron's expertly built tension and atmosphere into videogame form is Gearbox's main mandate. Has it succeeded? Read on, if you dare...

As of late it seems that navigating the multimedia chasm between movies and videogames is an extremely tricky business. How does one make a successful game from a movie, or vice versa? Both mediums are so radically different, to the extent that overcoming the design obstacles that arise when converting a movie into a semi-decent game seem insurmountable. Or are they...?

It's tough to tell. Safe to say, however, that rushing a development team to meet a movie release date after blatantly shoehorning a two hour movie into a 15-hour third-person action bore-a-thon, complete with slashing, bashing, dashing, and a whole heap of repetitive fetch-quest garbage, does not a decent movie to game adaptation make.

But, sadly, that's where the games industry seems to be leaning these days. The most recent movie adaptations have all, without exception, been beyond dire: *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Transformers*, *Beowulf*, *The Golden Compass* — all rushed, bug ridden turds, painfully squeezed from the anus of developers struggling to make a buck in this dog-eat-dog world of crowded markets and high production costs.

Hard times Daddy, but thankfully, when it comes to *Aliens* there are no such insane deadlines to meet, no new movie to synchronise release dates with. With this movie adaptation Gearbox has the resources, it has the people, it has the experience, and most importantly, it has the time to do justice to one of the greatest sci-fi flicks of all time.

And rest assured that this is the real deal — not a crappy *Aliens vs. Predator* spinoff. While the franchise has taken quite the beating in the last five or so years, there is still good reason to get excited about a game that attempts to bring the franchise back to its roots. We certainly are — and here's why...

## Getting into Gear

First: the facts. *Aliens* is a first-person shooter — a fact we should be celebrating due to developer Gearbox's expertise in the genre. In addition, the gun fuelled frenzy of the movie appears to suit this type of game perfectly, playing to the strengths of James Cameron's take on the *Aliens* universe.

And details, it's all about the details. Creative Director Brian Martel is a bigger *Aliens* geek that you and all your friends combined,

■ Game over, man. Game over...





and his enthusiasm for the franchise has trickled down to every member of his team. The mandate for every department, from sound to design, is to be as true to the original movie as humanly possible: a mandate that everyone involved in the game has embraced with gusto.

Most obviously the graphics immediately recall *Aliens*, with the team using not only the movie itself as a reference point, but the original art of the movie and even the sets themselves, as Gearbox take the painstaking research skills honed on the *Brothers in Arms* series and transfer them directly onto the *Aliens* project.

Each member of the team we met during our visit to the studio had a similar attitude to the *Aliens* franchise: a desire to make the game worthy of the license, and an almost compulsive motivation to remain true to the feel of

Cameron's opus. The team have been in constant contact with many responsible for the original movie, to make sure the direction they're heading in is the correct one.

These efforts are immediately tangible – to the extent that when the Hollywood set designer responsible for the *Aliens* movie saw the first, earliest version of the game he got nostalgic, claiming that it felt as though he was moving through the set that he himself designed. High praise indeed.

It's a double edged sword, however, since almost every sci-fi first-person shooter created has ripped off *Aliens*, especially when it comes to art design, in fact ripping off *Aliens* has been overdone to the point of cliché. So while *Aliens* looks and feels familiar, due to the hard work of Gearbox in replicating the movie, the fact that every generic shooter released in the last

five years also looks exactly like *Aliens* sorta kills the impact this accuracy may have had.

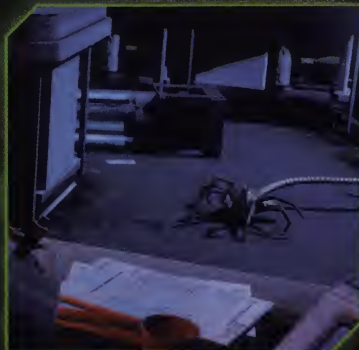
### Too Legit to Quit

But the legitimacy is there. This is the source material, and Gearbox has unprecedented access to all aspects of the original movie: art, old reels, and even the original sound files used in the movie all those years ago.

Example? Well, during our trip to Gearbox we were led into the sound studio – a dark, dank dungeon of sound and soda, populated by a friendly musician who looked uncannily like Meatloaf with a beard (not necessarily a bad thing). This was where the magic happened, where every single piece of music or effect is created, edited or implemented into the game itself. "Recognise this?" the slightly rotund sound-dude asked,



■ "Haha, stupid Alien" said the Marines, unaware that Daddy was behind them...



■ "I don't know what's going on here, so I'm just going to shoot everything... AHHHHHHH!!!"



■ In impromptu game of 'Twister' never goes amiss...





before playing what sounded like a monkey getting a banana shoved up it's arse. We didn't recognise a single thing.

Then, however, he played it back in double time, laden with a plethora of old school sound effects.

"How about now?" he said, with a smug grin.

Yes, raping the Gearbox's epic surround sound system was the high pitched 'skrrll' (is that even a word?) of an 'Alien'. The sound was uncanny: not only did it sound like *Aliens*, for some reason it felt like the original movie as well.

But the game itself? Well, since *Aliens* was undoubtedly in the gestation period of development, Gearbox were understandably reluctant to show too much of the game itself. But, reassuringly, what we did see was looking pretty spectacular at this early stage.

## Barricade!

One particular scene helped illustrate an interesting and (as far as we know) original innovation in the FPS genre. After being alerted to an imminent Alien attack, we watched as the player started to prepare the room, trying to block off various entry points in an attempt to funnel the Aliens through one specific doorway.

Then, the Aliens exploded into view but, due to the previous intricate planning, the attack was completely manageable, since the Aliens were restricted to only one or two points of entry.

But, *Aliens* being *Aliens*, it wasn't quite as simple as that. Attacking from the ground, from the ceilings, from the walls, from every position imaginable, Gearbox have attempted to create an enemy that exists outside our traditional ideas of AI. This time around your

enemy is less of a bullet sponge and more of an unpredictable foe that will utilise architecture in ways previously unseen in videogaming.

Gearbox is proud of its AI, but possibly even more proud of the high level of interaction that exists within the game's environment, allowing you to literally shape the gaming experience by planning ahead and managing the various different entry points the Aliens can attack from.

Although many FPS games have suggested this kind of pre-planning dynamic, *Aliens* seems to be one of the first to be so explicit in its execution. Players can barricade doors, seal off entry points – all in a way that helps add an increasing tension to proceedings, a tension often missing from many of today's run-and-gun shooters.

Surprisingly, Gearbox is even keen to innovate in areas of game



## WE WANT!

We want all this cool stuff from the movie in the game – **NOW!**



### CREEPY LITTLE GIRL

Imagine having to escort a little girl in one of the missions à la *Ico*. Having to move slowly through an Alien infested environment with a child's life at stake...



### POWER LOADER

We want to blowtorch some Alien arse in one of those crazy mech-loaders that Ripley utilised to such great effect in the movie. Come on Gearbox – make it happen.



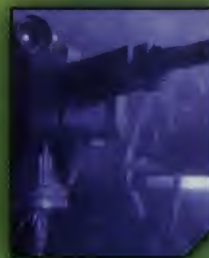
### INFECTED TEAMMATES

We want our teammates to possibly have an infestation inside them that could blow at any second. Gearbox couldn't confirm this – we think it's in the works.



### SENTRY GUNS

One cool scene in the *Aliens* Director's Cut, had the Aliens facing off against a multitude of sentry guns. We want to be able to set these mother truckers up and watch 'em go...



### KAMIKAZE

We want to send one of our teammates to an 'explodey' death, like the butch lesbian chick from *Aliens*, the movie – the one that Bill Paxton mistook for a man. Good work Bill, old chap...





■ Scrambled alien eggs – overdone



“GEARBOX  
WANTS  
PLAYERS’  
INITIAL,  
INSTINCTIVE,  
REACTIONS  
TO BE THE  
CORRECT ONE”

## I LIKE THE WAY YOU MOVE...



After watching some brief demos of *Aliens* in action, one lasting impression has lingered: we like the way they move. In general, FPS enemies are bipedal in nature, and walk solely on the floor (as you do) but in accordance with the *Aliens* franchise, these melon farmers come at you from all angles, from above, from the sides, from below – everywhere. These bad boys will use all parts of the environment, meaning that you never know quite which angle they’ll attack from.

design that have become stale as of late. Example? Well, one of the few sections of the game we were exposed to during our tour was a quicktime section – yep, the old pushy-button-during-a-cut-scene nonsense we’ve come to know and ultimately loathe during the past year or so.

**I think I’m gonna barf...**

But wait – don’t throw up in your mouth just yet, it’s actually a lot better than you think.

As opposed to the precise, exact button pushes found in most cut scene sequences – the kind that cause you to focus only on the specific button required, alienating you completely from the gameplay

experience – *Aliens* merely suggests a direction by highlighting a light green bar on the screen. To make the movement towards the bar players can use any part of the controller – the d-pad, analogue stick, the face buttons, or even SIXAXIS motion sensing.

The concept is that Gearbox wants players’ initial, instinctive reaction to be the correct one, helping immerse gamers into what is generally seen as an uninteractive experience – the random button press. By making any movement in the correct direction, from any control input, *Aliens* allows players to really involve themselves in something that was previously uninspiring.

In the example we were shown





■ Let's be honest: it looks like a flying vagina

the player was trapped in an air duct, with an Alien roughly two seconds from concocting a broth from his brain tissue.

A green bar appeared on the right of the screen, signalling to the player that he had to move in that direction. He did so, and the character began elbowing at the side of the duct. The green bar continued to flash, and as the player continued to push left he constantly elbowed the duct in a panic, eventually breaking out of the duct to safety.

It's an interesting twist on the ol' quicktime button push gameplay dynamic, and one that has more in common with heavily contextual control systems (like the one featured in the criminally

underplayed *Fahrenheit*, but more flexible). It's a welcome twist on a control method tired to the point of comatose.

So all the elements are in place, albeit roughly defined and in their early, pre-foetal stages. In the hands of detail focused Gearbox you can rest assured that the *Aliens* is on the right track.

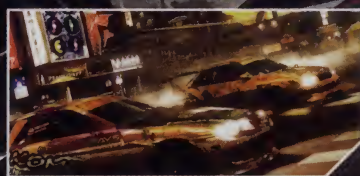
It's undoubtedly a franchise that deserves it. After being beaten down and sullied by soulless *Aliens* vs. *Predator* cash-ins, and plagiarised in every half-arsed sci-fi shooter ever made, this is the perfect chance for a resurgence of the series and an opportunity for gamers worldwide to be introduced to the true greatness of *Aliens*. Gearbox – don't let us down.

## BEEP BEEP BEEEEEEEP!

One of the real magic moments from *Aliens* the movie was the way in which those little motion/life sensor thingy-mi-bobs would beep into action, as the Aliens got close – eventually spiralling into a claustrophobic 'bee-bee-bee-bee-bee' as the tension increased to boiling point. Even at this early stage Gearbox have already begun using the sensor to great effect. The look and feel of the sensor in game is uncanny, using the same 'beep' sound heard in the movie.







# NEW RUBBER



Maybe we're just looking at *Race Driver: GRID* the wrong way. Credit where credit's due, *Colin McRae DIRT* was fantastic. What's to say we won't be equally amazed by Codemasters' next automotive effort? We're just pissy all the V8 Supercars content was pulled out. Ralph Fulton, Chief Games Designer at Codemasters, tries to convince us otherwise.





**OPS:** Let's get the 800-pound gorilla out the room first – *GRID* will allow players "to conquer the most prestigious official race tracks and championships" – yet this doesn't include V8 Supercars or DTM like the last games. What gives? Why did they need to be removed?

**RF:** About that gorilla, then. We love V8 and when we sat down right at the start of the project to spec out the content we wanted to see in this game, V8 Supercars and DTM were both in there. However there was a lot of other stuff we wanted to do too, like the US cities and the new Japanese content we've been talking about, and ultimately we only have a finite amount of resource with which to make a game. As you rightly note, we really want to evolve the series and win new fans and we think that the new content we've included can help us do that, but we simply couldn't include it and all 14 of the V8 tracks required by the license. To put it into perspective, the tracks we would have been required to build for V8 and DTM would have exceeded our total track budget for the game on their own. That's why we had to take the difficult decision to remove V8 from *GRID*.

**OPS:** It sounds to us as if *GRID* is a different beast altogether – why the change in focus?

**RF:** Yes, we're up front in saying this isn't a new TOCA/V8 game. The name change is important in that it signifies a change of focus that moves us on from our simulation roots. We're not making an arcade game,

but we believe there's a gap between those two extremes in which we can create a more accessible, immediate experience. We're still serious about building a realistically-simulated world, but we want it to be a world seen through the lens of a Hollywood director. That means ensuring that the game is fast-paced and rich with incident – after all, nobody ever complained about a race being too exciting.

**OPS:** Is there a real risk changing the formula like this?

**RF:** For a lot of people, continuing on the same road year-in, year-out was the

the next gen of the Neon – it's a jump on from the tech behind *DIRT*. The fact that EGO is our proprietary technology means that every single line of code written in the studio enhances all our games, so the engine really has advanced since last year – you should see real improvements in the look of the game, and in the way the physics feel during the race. You're right to single out damage as being really important to us, and since *DIRT* we've rewritten our whole car and environment damage system to make sure it's still ahead of the game. The way our cars deform in real-time is really amazing and

**"On the subject of V8 Supercars, we're exploring several options at the moment. One is DLC to enhance *GRID* post-release, and the other possibility is a standalone game based on the licence at some point."**

risk. I think we'd have been criticised if we had decided just to do the same thing again, which is why we've made some bold decisions and taken the game in new directions. We love racing, we're motorsport fans so we really believe we're creating something that anyone who shares our interests will love too. *GRID* is all about making racing cars exciting again.

**OPS:** What has improved for the EGO engine? We take it damage is high on the agenda?

**RF:** We're using the EGO Engine, which is

you can play replays back and forth in super-slow motion to see the detail of each impact.

**OPS:** It was the little things that really added up to make the last *Race Driver* so visually spectacular. We can still remember being amazed when we noticed the heat from the engine warped your view of the bonnet and the track in front – and that was on PS2. Have you gone mad with details with the grunt of the PS3 at your disposal?

**RF:** Absolutely, and this generation really allows you to go to town on detail. One of our big things has been to get away from the traditionally static environments that you see in racing games, so we've concentrated a lot on making things move around the track – whether it's the 40,000 or so spectators who attend each event, or flags which catch in the dynamically generated wind, or marshals who wave yellow flags at accidents and patrol the off-track area. And one really cool feature is that you can enter your name at the start of the game and your Pit Chief will call you by it when he talks to you during the race.

**OPS:** Motorsport culture down under is rife, so how are you going to sell *GRID* to Australia without the local flavour? Codies reportedly still holds the V8 license – news that DLC or a standalone game is on the cards would put a lot of minds at ease.

**RF:** Well *GRID* is a game about motorsport, so I hope that even without V8 content in it there will still be enough in there to interest Australian motorsport fans. I know there is a healthy drift scene down there as well as touring cars and Formula 3 and all the disciplines in the game offer exactly the experience you talked about earlier – of close, aggressive, action-packed racing. On the subject of V8 Supercars, we're exploring several options at the moment. One is DLC to enhance *GRID* post-release, and the other possibility is a standalone game based on the licence at some point. **⌂**



Words: Adam Mathew

# NOSTALGIC NASTALGIA

**K**icking the bucket, biting the dust, getting moved into 'upper, upper management', the big game over, getting married to OJ – whichever morbid euphemism you choose to use, they all boil down to the same universal truth:

death is unavoidable and that sucks balls.

As gamers, we have a pretty intimate relationship with the Grim Reaper compared to our non-gaming cousins, and this is because frequent death is such a common part of virtual life for

us. For the most part this can make you kind of blasé towards the concept of carking it; but every once in a while you'll experience a truly unique shafting that will stick around in your memory longer than it probably should...

## DEATH BY WTF?

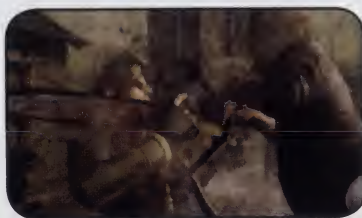


### Silent Hill

**Type:** Shocking

**System:** PlayStation

**Event:** Dying at the beginning of a game can be both an artsy and a freaky experience. This is especially so if the death involves flailing about in the dark amidst inescapable barbed wire, rotting corpses on gurneys and skinless mole people slashing at your nether region with rusty razor blades.



### Resident Evil 4

**Type:** Shocking

**System:** PlayStation 2

**Event:** We bet when Leon signed up to be a hero to save the presidents daughter he didn't think it would mean getting a 'short-back-and-severed' haircut from a maniacal chainsaw wielding local. Lesson of the day: those Spanish don't like unexpected tourists - so keep a safe distance, gringo.



### The Suffering

**Type:** Shocking

**System:** PlayStation 2

**Event:** Speaking from first hand experience; escaping from a maximum security penitentiary is one of life's greatest pleasures. Until a demonic horror with swords for limbs jack-in-the-boxes out of an overhead vent and relieves your character of his melon - as you involuntarily relieve yourself.



## Call of Duty 4

**Type:** Shocking

**System:** PlayStation 3

**Event:** Cruising around being virtually invisible as an elite sniper in a camouflage suit, is a super cool experience. You have the god-like power to select who lives and who dies – until you trigger an alarm and then your windpipe gets ventilated by a pack of rabid attack dogs, humbling the hell out of you.



## The Darkness

**Type:** Shocking

**System:** PlayStation 3

**Event:** Spending a good deal of the game smooching and watching TV with Jackie's girlfriend was one of the most heart warming experiences we've ever seen in a game. Then Uncle Paulie comes along, kidnaps her, and uses her brains to redecorate a wall – very left field and very disturbing.

## Tomb Raider

**Type:** Shocking

**System:** PlayStation

**Event:** Miscalculating a large jump in *Tomb Raider* meant hearing Lara's disturbing screams followed by a sickening crunch. It gets better though, because in the final level there's a fall so massive that Lara screams her lungs out three full times before smashing into the molten floor below – which promptly sets her alight.



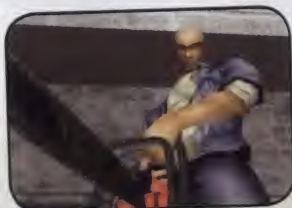
# UNPLEASANT WAYS TO GO

## Half-Life 2

**Type:** Painful

**System:** PlayStation 3

**Event:** Wanna be disturbed? Set some head crab zombies on fire and listen to them wail and shriek in utter agony. Trivia: if you play their horrendous screaming backwards they're really screeching, "God, help!", "Kill me!", "Why! Why! Why!", "Get it off me!", "Help me!". Truly some freaky, freaky shit.



## Manhunt

**Type:** Painful

**System:** PlayStation 2

**Event:** Some of the craziest ways to die in this over-the-top gore fest included: crowbaring someone in the spuds, chainsawing someone's intestines out, and garroting a guy till his head comes off. If you thought *Manhunt* was a great idea for a game you're an absolute Froot Loop.

## Syphon Filter

**Type:** Painful

**System:** PlayStation

**Event:** We miss the good old days before political correctness got fashionable; back when you could tag a terrorist with Gabe Logan's taser, hold in the button for a few seconds, and totally set that mofo on fire. We can only speculate as to how many triple A's that bad boy must've chewed through.



## God of War

**Type:** Painful

**System:** PlayStation 2

**Event:** Kratos got freakin' owned when he found Pandora's Box. Being impaled is a rather nasty experience at the best of times, but it reaches new heights of pain when the item impaling you is a stone column twice your size being hurled at you from half a world away by a pissed off God.

## Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance

**Type:** Painful

**System:** PlayStation 2

**Event:** Quan Chi jumps on your shoulders reefs on the base of your skull and stretches your neck. This basically means the spine gets torn away from its natural moorings, meaning that all sorts of nerves and bones get wrenched in the process. Sort of like a slower more painful version of Sub-Zero's head rip.



## Tomb Raider

**Type:** Painful

**System:** PlayStation

**Event:** Drowning in the PSone versions of *Tomb Raider* was terrible. We've heard experts say it's a peaceful way to go (and really, how could anyone know that?), but it sure is painful to watch Lara suck down gobs of water and thrash and kick while clutching her throat.





# DEATH BY CLICHÉ' CHEESEBALL

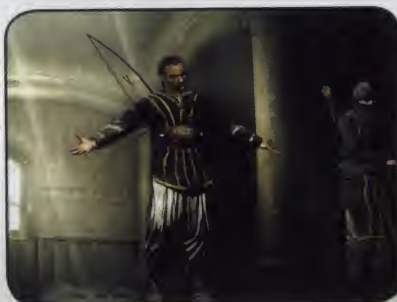


## FFVII

**Type:** Sappy

**System:** PlayStation

**Event:** Here's a famous videogame death if ever there was one. Truly there wasn't a dry eye in the house when Sephiroth dropped out of the sky and shishkabobbed Aeris through the kidneys. Unfortunately for the rest of us still left alive, we had to endure Cloud talking about his 'feelings'. Blech!



## Assassin's Creed

**Type:** Sappy

**System:** PlayStation 3

**Event:** Killing your mark is the manliest thing one can do. Why then does Altair always hold the victim 'ever-so-tenderly' as they blah blah about their life, dreams, aspirations, what they ate for breakfast and the symbolism of the colour of the food they chose to eat, etc. Dude, we just killed your arse – clearly we don't care.



## Tenchu

**Type:** Sappy

**System:** PlayStation

**Event:** Rikimaru kicks the crap out of the Demon king and then has to hold up a boulder to allow Ayame to escape the impending cave in. Basically, she makes it – he gets shafted. Don't make symbolic funeral gestures woman, grab a shovel and dig the poor bastard out of there.

## Max Payne

**Type:** Sappy

**System:** PlayStation 2

**Event:** Max arrives at his house in the suburbs to find that his wife Michelle has been murdered by a bunch of crazy V junkies. We can understand that you're upset Max, but that's no excuse for having yourself a lame-arse Darth Vader moment. "Noooooooooooo" indeed.



## Metal Gear Solid

**Type:** Sappy

**System:** PlayStation

**Event:** Snake out-snipes Sniper Wolf then Otacon goes babbling on about how his love bloomed on the battlefield, yet he couldn't save her. All the while the musical score swells, the cold indifferent snow pitters down and some wolves howl mournfully. Since when did Hallmark start directing mid level videogame cut-scenes anyway?



## Mafia

**Type:** Sappy

**System:** PlayStation 2

**Event:** Finishing the game and going into witness protection is a girly thing to do. You just get shot years later by goons – 'hired' goons. The arrator then reflects upon his own death as he bleeds out on the lawn You got what was coming buddy, nobody screws with the family and gets away with it, capiche?





# DEATH BY BLACK COMEDY



## The Punisher

**Type:** Amusing

**System:** PlayStation 2

**Event:** The Punisher is the ultimate anti-hero who isn't afraid to go creative when he's interrogating scumbag criminals. Our personal favourites: dangling people over piranha ponds, popping up out of coffin with an M60 to mow down people attending a gangland funeral, or that old chestnut – death by rhino horn.



## FlatOut

**Type:** Amusing

**System:** PlayStation 2

**Event:** Seatbelts are strictly for pansies. The true measure of a real man is measured in how many metres he can hurl himself through a windshield and down the road. Alternatively, it's also measured in how hard he can slam his face into large novelty dartboard, rings of fire, or into some oversized bowling pins.



## Scarface: The World is Yours

**Type:** Amusing

**System:** PlayStation 2

**Event:** You're Tony Montana, the drug king of Miami. You don't take any shit from anybody or anything, Mother Nature included. That said, even Tony has his limits – and fighting off the shark that will attack you if you spend too long in the water is a little too much for him. You're fish-food, cabrone.

## Hitman: Blood Money

**Type:** Amusing

**System:** PlayStation 3

**Event:** Agent 47 is a remorseless, efficient killing machine. Apparently this complete lack of morals extends to personal dignity as well. Who among you can forget eliminating people while wearing a Santa suit? It's videogame black comedy at its very finest. Merry Christmas...



## Stranglehold

**Type:** Amusing

**System:** PlayStation 3

**Event:** Even the most ardent third-person shooter phobes would be hard-pressed not to crack a smile at *Stranglehold's* slo-mo, bullet-tracking, right-in-the-penis special kills. What isn't absolutely hilarious about some poor gun-toting bad guy checking out with a lead slug to his testisatchel?



## Urban Chaos: Riot Response

**Type:** Amusing

**System:** PlayStation 2

**Event:** If you went down in *Urban Chaos* the last thing you'd see would be skinhead punk's Doc Martin's delivering a cracking curb-stomp to your face. But there were plenty of ways to get your own back: like knocking a boss into sausage mincer. Hot dog, we have a wiener...





**OPS: You really nailed the character of 47 from the *Hitman* game series. Did you sit down and study the game's character or did you come up with the portrayal yourself?**

**TO:** I was not unfamiliar with the game's character in that I read about the game. But I am a big believer of making decisions with little information. I am a big fan of that. It's the old trust your gut theory. And then I read a book two or three years ago that supported my theory. It's this idea that doctors have made better decisions with less information. So I thought there you go, I'm on the right track. My experience has been in the past when I have gathered a great deal of information for a role, it tends to get confusing. I find if you read the script over and over, it's rather informative. I was lucky that [*Hitman* director] Xavier Gens was a huge fan of the game so I put a lot of faith in him.

**OPS: How much did Xavier actually dictate how you would go on to play the role?**

**TO:** Xavier had intended to make a film that was elegant, that had style. I had a sense of the films that were inspiring

**OPS: Did you happen to play any of the *Hitman* games before you started filming?**

**TO:** No, I had not had that experience. And I still haven't. To be honest, I am really unfamiliar with that world. I have an iPod and I'm a proud iPhone user now. But that's about it at the moment.

**OPS: Did you get to keep any of *Hitman* props?**

**TO:** Did I keep anything? No. Nothing came home with me. Nothing stored away in the luggage.

**OPS: You obviously beefed up for the role. What kind of weights program did you do?**

**TO:** I was at the gym six or seven times a week. I hadn't worked out like that since college. It was a different type of training. It was essentially body building and a different type of weight training. In the first couple of weeks or two it was twice a day every day weights and boxing and different types of stuff but then we lightened it down to 1 hour 15 minutes a day with no aerobic activity at all. The trainer decided he didn't want me to lose any weight. He only wanted me to gain weight so we just did these

if you eat these small meals throughout the day you don't have this sense of lull after big meals. You can eat and then be at the gym within 30 mins and not feel like, "Jesus, I just ate."

**OPS: Despite the fact you were in the gym for so long, there is really only one scene with you with your shirt off.**

**TO:** I was in the f--king gym for weeks. I was like, "Get the goddam jacket off! Let's just do the whole scene naked! Walk around naked in a red tie. I worked hard!" They said it's not really in the game. I said, "F--k the game! [laughs] *Hitman* naked with a red tie. They will love it! The next *Hitman* game he'll be naked!" There was a part of me that was thinking, "I worked out all that time for the one shot?" But getting paid to go to the gym is not such a bad thing.

**OPS: What was it like having the bald head?**

**TO:** Bald guys don't appreciate it because they give you a look initially like, "Oh, you're another bald guy." And then they realise you're a guy with hair who cut his hair and then you're not part of the club. And then sometimes they

**TO:** I don't worry about it too much. I have been lucky to play a wide variety of roles.

**OPS: What was it like working with model Olga Kurylenko? She's pretty damn hot and you shared a naked scene with her... what was that like?**

**TO:** It was not difficult working with her when she was naked. [laughs] In fact, quite the contrary. She was fantastic. I feel very fortunate that she was involved, she worked very hard, we invested a lot of time into that portion of the story. I really felt like that relationship was the part of the story that would elevate the overall piece. That's what would make it worth caring about. I thought she did a great job, it wasn't an easy task especially given she had very little experience as an actress and I think she put a great deal of trust in me and we spent a lot of time working together.

**OPS: How do you deal with those moments of awkwardness during filming a sex scene?**

**TO:** I said, "Is there anything you don't want me to do?" We felt like we were in a pretty good place. Xavier creates a

# HIT 'EM UP

to him. I had a sense of that. The first time we sat down we talked about physicalising the character and him having a sense of grace. Xavier said, "I'd like him to look like he's floating when he's walking."

**OPS: The *Hitman* has a very distinctive walk and because we see the back of your head quite a lot during the film, did you find yourself having to act more with your body? This may sound a tad crazy, but did you have to also act with the back of your head as well as your face?**

**TO:** Yes, honestly I do take all those decisions seriously. Again, I don't try to over think it. Like all decisions, you go with your gut. But it is a thought process – the movement, the physicalisation. There were a lot of shots from behind. Xavier and I talked about the physical nature of *Hitman*. After I met Xavier, I was in the gym the next day with a goal as to how much weight I was going to gain to do the character justice and make it believable. I had seen images of the game and so you think of it all as not a separate but rather a singular thing – all of it defining the character. I am thrilled that fans of the game feel we accomplished that.

intense weight workouts every day. He didn't want me to run or do any aerobic activity. It was rather uninteresting but it came with the job.

**OPS: How much weight did you actually put on then?**

**TO:** I am 165 lbs and was 180 lbs when we started shooting. So I put on a good 15 pounds or more. I lost a lot of fat and put on a lot of muscle.

**OPS: And what was your diet?**

**TO:** Yeah, f--king diet. The guy sent me a list of food that I could and couldn't eat. There is no salt, sugar, bread, dairy. You take that out of your diet and it's amazing how healthy you can become. And you can eat so much food if you take that stuff out of your diet and add the exercise. You eat so much food. It's amazing and you don't feel it at all. Remove sugar, salt from your diet, dairy and it's amazing what that does. Eat like a bowl of oatmeal with some egg whites and eat five or six times a day. It's all about lean. It's all vegetables, potatoes, no butter, no sugar, you take that out. So it all tastes terrible. Alcohol was on the "do not take" list but I kept that in. You got to live. It's amazing. What's great about that experience, I tend to try to do that when I am working on film sets,

say, "We really don't appreciate it."

**OPS: What do you prefer?**

**TO:** I can tell you my wife prefers my hair. I prefer the hair as well. I figure while I have it, it's nice to have it.

**OPS: How long did you have to wear the bar code on the back of your head?**

**TO:** It came off every day at the end of the day. It was nothing a baby wipe couldn't take care of.

**OPS: What kind of weapons training did you do?**

**TO:** I did a lot of weapons training and all that fight training required a great deal of work. It was good fun. That saber fight went, "Action! Cut, Cut, Cut! Oh f--k!" It was some guy grabbing his hand, taping it up, bleeding... there were a lot of cuts and bruises. This sharp gun jammed way down in my hands and split the webbing. We should have done stitches, but we taped it up with little glue tape glue things and painted the wrap and kept going.

**OPS: You recently starred as the villain in *Die Hard 4.0*. Are you a little worried about being typecast as a villain?**

good atmosphere to work. I don't recall anyone being terribly uncomfortable."

**OPS: Now you have newfound fame, what do you expect?**

**TO:** There are more responsibilities that come with it. The work side is rather great in that in success you have more choices and Lord knows that is a wonderful thing for an actor. In your personal private life, that's where it's tricky. On one hand, you put your arms around it because it comes with the job and I think it's a slippery slope if you try to deny that. And you just try to be thoughtful about it. If it gets too much, you can always quit.

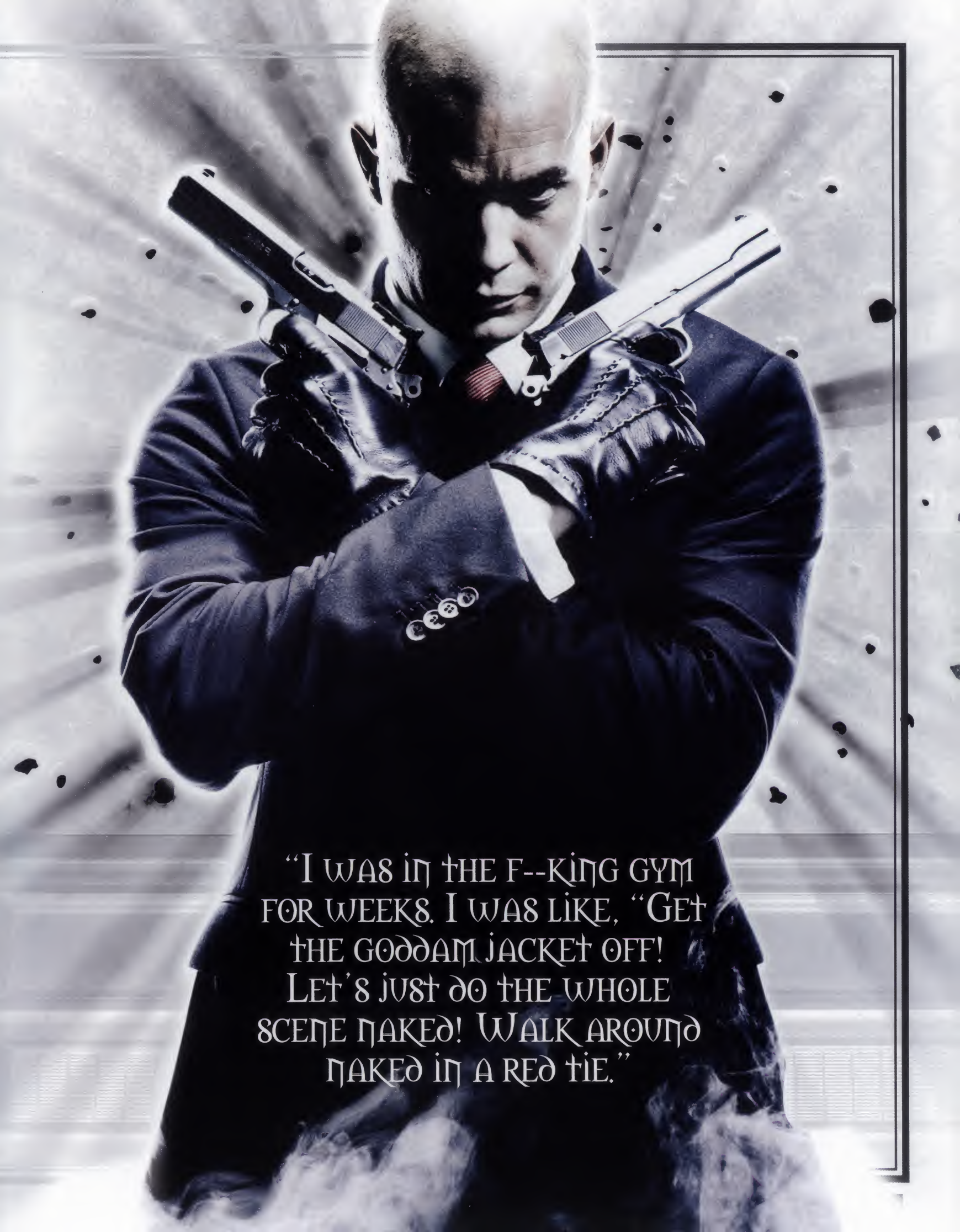
**OPS: What do you learn on every set you are on?**

**TO:** I have spent every job learning. On *Die Hard* I learned from Bruce Willis and on *Catch and Release* I watched Jennifer Garner and so on. You are watching all these people and their work and what's to be learned. You look at their lives and work out how did they manage it?

**OPS: What are your hobbies and interests?**

**TO:** I am a big basketball fan. I love playing it. I love the drama of sports. It's the greatest unscripted drama there is.





"I WAS IN THE F--KING GYM  
FOR WEEKS. I WAS LIKE, "GET  
THE GODDAM JACKET OFF!  
LET'S JUST DO THE WHOLE  
SCENE NAKED! WALK AROUND  
NAKED IN A RED TIE."



# THE CLANCY

A record-breaking author and cunning businessman, Tom Clancy has his name on more videogames than anyone else on the planet. In light of Ubisoft's upcoming *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas 2*, *OPS* takes a look at the rise of the Clancy phenomenon and the inspiration for each of his gaming franchises.

**B**ack in 1999, when he was 53, it was common knowledge that Tom Clancy was boning a hotcake 21 years his junior. Common knowledge, because the old grizzly bear had taken her as his second wife. Yes, along with sods like Hugh Hefner and actor Robert Duvall, Tom 'Moneybags' Clancy had earned enough money to book life-long tickets on the fluffy muff roundabout. And he's still earning the moola to this day. Despite the fact that he hasn't written a book in five years, he scores forests of cash from the litany of literary spin-offs and gaming paraphernalia this magazine regularly celebrates. He's even part owner of the Baltimore Orioles, a US baseball team, which surely wouldn't hurt his wallet either. So yeah, Tom Clancy has made it – and did so some time ago.

Like most successful Yanks that have lived the American Dream of nightly cleavage, picket fences, and rolls of \$100 bills, Clancy stayed away from sniffing glue behind the high school toilets and went to college. He obviously suspected he had the potential to be a dollar-harvesting wordsmith as he focused his energies on bagging an English lit degree.

And bag it he did, though he took his fair time putting it to use. Tom Clancy was 37 by the time *The Hunt for Red October*, his first big spook-and-eagle novel, was released and able to grab readers by the testisatchels. Things picked up after that. Only five years later his fifth book, *Clear and Present Danger*, became the highest selling book in the 1980s and cemented Clancy's right to wear slippers anywhere. Yet amazingly, the 14

books that Clancy has written are, of themselves, not his most fiscally brilliant feat.

More impressive is the way his name has become synonymous with high-tech fear mongering. You think Clancy, you think terrorists, Armageddon, Dolly Parton returning to the Top 20, and the powers that be fondling truth like it's a rubber tit. This self-franchising has allowed Clancy to stamp his name on over 35 books written by other writers and, of course, scores of videogames that he has absolutely bugger all to do with developing.

## RED STORM RISING

Of course Clancy didn't wake up one day and suddenly get the itch to throw in writing and become the next Miyamoto. The Clancy gaming legacy started when *Red Storm Rising*, a submarine game loosely based on one of his novels, was made by PC guru Sid Meier's development company, MicroProse, for the Amiga, C64, and IBM PCs.

But the experience was enough to calibrate his nose for fields of flapping green, and in 1996 he took the *Red Storm* title and ran with it, creating the developer Red Storm Entertainment. Two years later they released *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six*, based on the novel of the same name.

It was like throwing fat on a fire. Soon after that Ubisoft took Red Storm Entertainment





# CLANCY LEGACY



## TOM CLANCY ON FILM

Will more of Tom Clancy's branded games head to the big screen? The film adaptation of *Rainbow Six* has been floating around the heads of studios since the book came out back in 1994. We haven't heard much of it in the last few years, but given the gap between *The Sum of All Fears* book and film (11 years) there's still a possibility it might happen. Additionally a *Splinter Cell* movie starring Thomas Jane was scheduled to happen two years ago, but has since stalled. Will it ever creep out of the shadows?



off Tom Clancy's hands but retained the rights to use the Tom Clancy name as a badge and have been wildly successful since.

But this is harder than it sounds. Licensed games have typically deserved the sort of respect reserved for field mice that've broken into your winter silo of food supplies. How did Red Storm Entertainment and Ubisoft buck the trend?

### SING A RAINBOW

But simply, they left the bookish bits of Clancy's novel out and kept the elements that would translate into a bold venture for the genre. *Rainbow Six* – the game – took the substance of the Clancy novels – the applied military research, the focus and respect for precision – and breathed it into a 3D thriller where a single bullet wound was terminal.

There'd been sim-shooters before that, but *Rainbow Six* did it better with its compelling storyline and exhaustive pre-round planning. Just as Clancy's books had become associated with political conspiracy and a broken-leash military, *Rainbow Six* rapidly established his branded games as stoic high-tech sims.

What's interesting is how the series has evolved. It started out on PC packed with a host of technical features that make geeks hard in the pants, but as the console market has slowly cannibalised its mouse-based older brother Ubisoft has streamlined the bells and whistles. Initially, with the release of possibly the worst version of *Rainbow Six* on the original PSone, this compromise was tantamount to dropping a razor-clawed rat down your pants. Fortunately things have significantly improved, with *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas 2* expected to have console gamers dodging around their homes wearing ski masks and touting semi-automatic zucchinis.

### BELIEVE IN GHOSTS

The *Ghost Recon* series has seen an almost identical progression, moving from having more buttons than a 747 cockpit to a simpler life with the recent *GRAV 2*. In terms of the series' inspiration, it seems to have been conceived independently by Ubisoft as *Rainbow Six*'s future twin brother in khakis.

Another way of previously differentiating between the two is that *R6* sees you kill bad guys at home, where *Ghost Recon* was about killing bad guys away from the US of A.

As it has moved through its various sequels for the last seven years it's slowly began to pull itself away from that rigid mould. In particular, the *GRAV* evolution has introduced the CrossCom system which is a fantasy version of the USA's Army Land Warrior System, and a swag of near future, military-specific high-tech kit.

### UNCLE SAM

While cynics who couch crash all day might argue the two series' are still dead similar, there's no arguing that *Splinter Cell* is it's own man. The *Splinter Cell* series marked a fundamental change for Tom Clancy games.

Whereas once games were directly inspired by books he himself had penned, *Splinter Cell* was inspired by stealth games (like *Metal Gear Solid*) and was later turned into a series of books written by authors other than Mr. Clancy himself.

Indeed the only thing Clancy ever did regarding the *Splinter Cell* project was endorse the concept. And funnily enough, Clancy actually had an issue with Sam Fisher having both thermal and night vision, claiming that such a device was impossible to make. Fortunately the creators argued strongly for it and the goggles have been the series' trademark for the past four releases.

In bold form Ubisoft are now beginning to move out of their Clancy comfort zone with the upcoming *Splinter Cell Conviction* (currently not announced for PS3). With Sam Fisher on the run and no longer sporting his usual goggles (at least initially), at least no one can accuse Ubisoft of being gutless with its design choices.

And it's probably a good thing, too. With Clancy seemingly out of the writing game indefinitely, so he can spend more time perfecting his golf swing and sucking back daiquiris by a tropical pool full of nude native females, at least we know that his thrilling political setups and well-read warfare are in brazen hands. **A**



# ONLINE

The latest PS3 Network news, online reviews, reader online section and more!

## CHECK OUT...

... all this juicy online goodness



### Turok

Make up your own mind about the hit-and-miss revival of *Turok* with this playable demo. Go on, have a go! It's got a cool knife and some big-arse dinosaurs. Try it, you just might like it.



### Bionic Commando

It's not playable, but take a first glimpse at a game that could be one of the major breakthrough titles of 2008. Plus he's got a stylin' extendable arm.



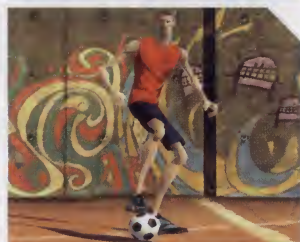
### Mortal Kombat II

The high point of the *Mortal Kombat* franchise, gruesome fatalities and hi-larious babalities all return in one of the greatest 2D fighters of all time.



### Wall-E

Outside of *Cars*, Pixar has knocked classic after classic out of the ballpark. Get a sneak peek at its latest creation by downloading this trailer from the PlayStation Store.



### FIFA Street 3

Not for everyone, but you might get a 'kick' (groan) from EA's unique approach to street soccer in *FIFA Street 3*. Well worth a download for fans of the sport.



### Everyday Shooter

Probably the best conceived, well-balanced old-school shooter out there. We gave it a five star review for a good reason – it's compulsive and fun.

## UNREAL TOURNAMENT III ONLINE REVIEW

Keeping it unreal...



■ "Bakoom! Whoops, I mean Kaboom! Damn, I never get it right!"

The big daddy of first-person shooters comes home, online, and millions rejoice. There's no problem finding someone to frag, whatever your flavour. Deathmatch is the perennial favourite, though plenty of Warfare and Capture the Flag matches are available to help mix it up. Newbies should take note that if you're going head to head with dudes using a keyboard and mouse, chances are you'll get your arse handed to you as the mouse reacts quicker than the old controller, and if you're up against guys using them, it's a fair guess they've played *Unreal Tournament* before, and you may get served (or pwned, as the damn weiner kids say nowadays).

The only gripe we had (and it is a big one) was the latency. The game is smooth enough and looks fantastic, but there's about a quarter second lag from when you press fire, to when your weapon actually fires. This might not sound like much, but it means you need to lead your shots and pre-empt their destination, rather than just



jumping on and fragging the crap outta people. It should be noted that we were playing the US version of the game on US servers – however that shouldn't affect the gameplay to the extent that it has. Perhaps there'll be a downloadable patch to solve the problem, though considering how slick *Warhawk* and *Resistance* are online; the lag should be non-existent. If a patch is released add a bonus star to the below score.

★★★



■ "Man, hovercraft traffic is busy today..."



# PIXELJUNK MONSTERS

Monsters, Inc.

We get a crapload of PSN games delivered to our office (emphasis on the word 'crap') and for the most part they arrive unheralded, as we mump and moan, arguing over who'll be forced to trudge through them, in the blind hope that we'll find the next SSHD, or more recently, *Everyday Shooter*.

But when *PixelJunk Monsters* arrived in our post-box eyebrows were raised – mostly due to the 'PixelJunk' in the title. Since the previous *PixelJunk* game (*PixelJunk Racers*) was somewhat of a minor classic, with its hyper simplistic game mechanics and breakneck speed. We hoped that the *Monsters* would follow suit.

And follow they did, with gusto. *PixelJunk Monsters* has you playing as a village chieftain who must protect his children from an onslaught of monsters by setting up towers that can launch arrows, cannonballs, lasers and all manner of destructive weaponry.

Balance is key here, certain monster types are vulnerable to different types of fire, so you must



use your limited funds to set up the best defence possible. Attacks come in waves, so each requires a different strategy, and the attacks progressively grow more intense, forcing you to balance careful planning with rushed improvisation.

Sound complicated – but it's actually as simple as gaming gets. *PixelJunk Monsters* is a delightful slice of retro gold, and well worth checking out at the cheap price point.

★★★★

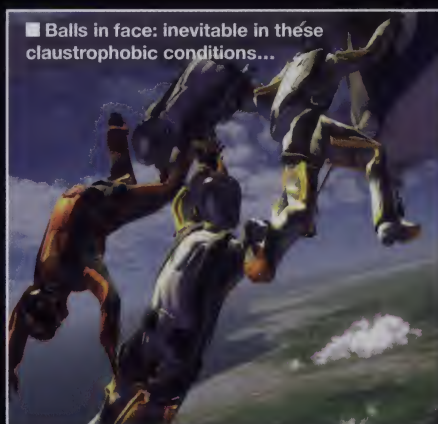
## SKY DIVING

Forgot the parachute...

*Sky Diving* is a PSN game that seems to fly against the cheap and cheerful style of other downloadable games in the network. Clocking in at over 400mb, it's a hefty download – almost eight times the size of *PixelJunk Monsters* – and it's clear from the outset why.

From the very beginning it's clear that *Sky Diving* has production values that outperform most games on the PSN – with high end graphics, fully rendered 3D models and silky smooth animations, this is a game that can compete aesthetically with many full-priced games.

Sadly however, it has a firnckity, SIXAXIS based motion sensing system that will cause to lodge your controller into the nearest wall on more than one occasion. *Sky Diving* requires the sort of precision controls that motion sensing can't really provide, and as such players will find themselves struggling not because of reaction time or lack of skill, but purely because they can't get the damn



controller to work properly.

It's a shame, because it looks good, and functions adequately – but the shonky controls result in a gaming experience best avoided.

★★

## GAMER OF THE MONTH

**Name:** Stuart Johnson

**Network ID:** STUflamable37

**Now Playing:** SKATE, NFS Prostreet, COD4, Warhawk

**Most looking forward to:** Battlefield: Bad Company

**I will school you at:** Warhawk with my sniper rifle

**Most bizarre message sent/received:** I received a message saying, "Are you David?"



# LOLGASM



## Altair is a Jerk

Fair enough, Altair has a job to do (that is, stabbing dudes in the throat real good with his hidden blade) but does he really have to be such an ass about it? Yes. Yes he does. Watch, point and laugh as some random chap attempts to politely squeeze past Altair. You're going nowhere bitch.

**Check it out at:** <http://www.gamevideos.com/video/id/16305>  
**Or Google:** Assassin's Creed pushing



## A Day in the Life...

Watch two of those pesky turret drones from portal shooting the shit with each other (in their 'kerrazay' robotic voices) regarding a number of topics including *Call of Duty 4* vs. *Halo 3* (*Call of Duty* FTW!) An absolute must if you've played through *Portal*, and hilarious even if you haven't.

**Check it out at:** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uz5c131KTK](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uz5c131KTK)  
**Or Google:** Portal Day in the Life



## Space Invaders

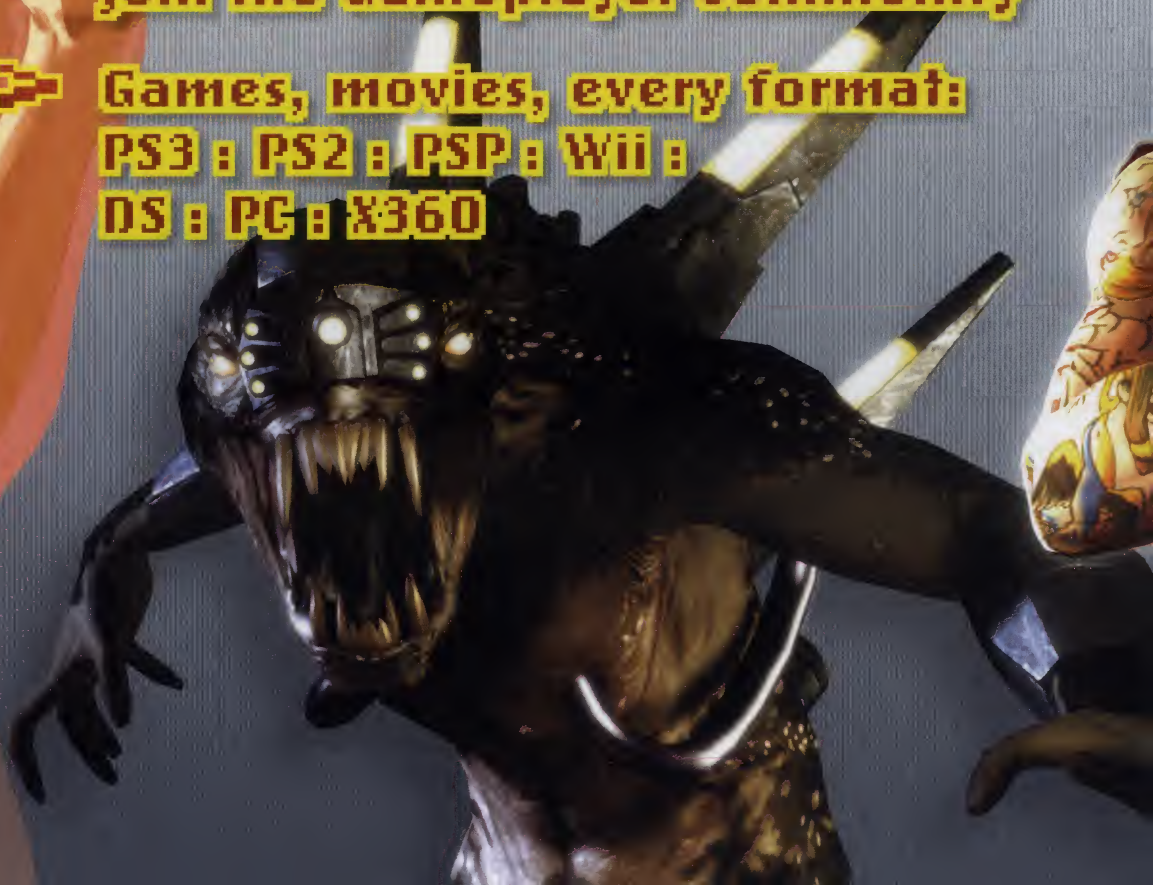
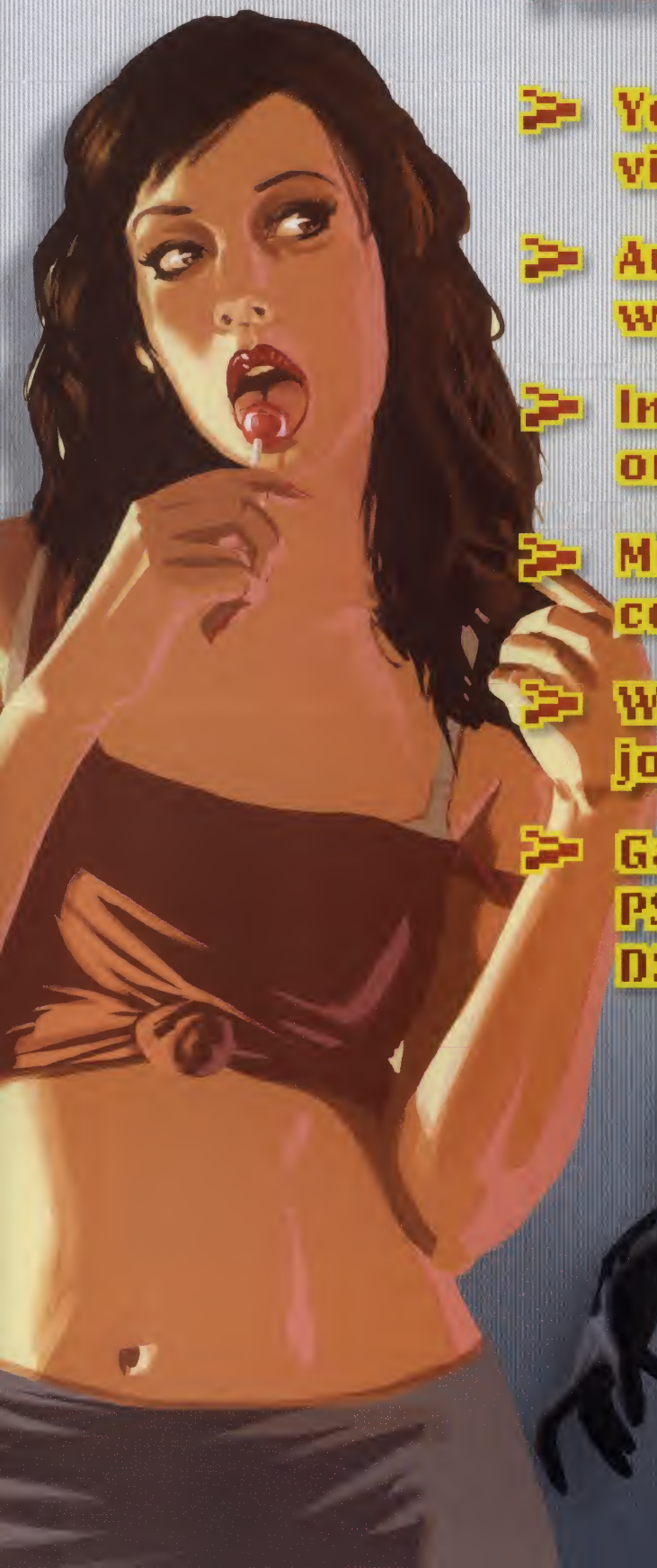
This is genius. Full Stop. This group of dudes create a real live action version of *Space Invaders* in a lecture hall. Watch as the 'Aliens' move slowly down the hall into oblivion. The sheer time and planning required for something of this magnitude is off the frickin' charts, and the end result is simply spectacular.

**Check it out at:** [www.collegehumor.com/video:1699974](http://www.collegehumor.com/video:1699974)  
**Or Google:** Real life Space Invaders



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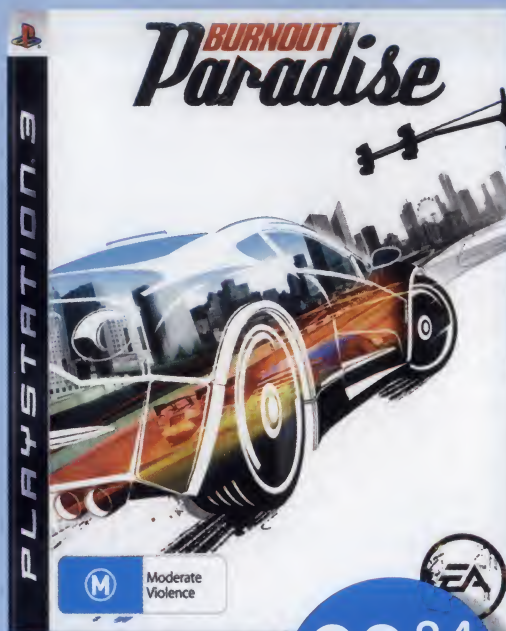
93<sup>84</sup>

EVERYDAY LOW PRICE



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# REVIEWS

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## REVIEW RATINGS

**01** Reserved for the very worst that developers have to offer. Essentially, anything that receives this score has no redeeming qualities whatsoever. A game receiving this score could not possibly be any worse, unless it was broken from the outset (or gave you cancer, or killed your dog). A game that should never have even survived its first pitch – as bad as it gets.

**02** A terrible, terrible game. There may be one or two things about this game that work, or aren't actually broken, but they are so hopelessly outnumbered by the sheer quantity of badness that they basically cease to exist. Maybe it has a clever name, maybe the concept was sound – but virtually every single thing about it is bad beyond belief. Not worth the effort.

**03** Very disappointing. A game with this score is fundamentally flawed in a number of extremely vital ways. There may be one or two things that could've been done somewhat worse than they have been, but for most part it's totally uninspired, boring and unappealing in every way. There are games that are worse, but there's not that many.

**04** Poor. There may be parts of this game that are vaguely fun, and it may be robust enough in a few departments, but the overall package is lacking any significant reason to stick it out. Games receiving this score may show initial promise, or sound good at first, but will be unrefined, undercooked and let down by shoddy execution and poor attention to detail.

**05** Mediocre. In the strictest terms, 50% is a pass – just. Unfortunately, a game receiving this score will have had just as many things go wrong with it as go right, and that really isn't enough to succeed. A game receiving this score will probably be entertaining in parts without excelling anywhere, yet equally sub-par in others without being outright awful.

**06** Decent enough, although still lacking a certain something. A game receiving this score will be sound, but will have some fairly glaring faults and your interest will probably wane pretty quickly. It will have a number of limitations that will probably turn off more than a few gamers, but will get just enough right to keep dedicated fans of the genre ploughing through.

**07** Good. A robust, fun game that's well worth a look, although will only rarely amaze. A game receiving this score will have more or less accomplished nearly all it set out to do in a decent fashion, but it will have some noticeable problems that prevent it from being as good as it could be. Nevertheless, they generally won't ruin the overall gaming experience.

**08** Great. A game receiving this score comes highly recommended. A combination of some odd issues, minor problems or a lack of innovation may hamper it somewhat, but the overall impression it leaves it very positive. Very entertaining, very satisfying and you wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to others. Well ahead of the pack in most departments.

**09** Excellent. Outstanding in almost every way. Some negligible blemishes will just keep it from being held aloft as a true masterpiece, but it is very likely the best in its field. Most elements of this game will be truly remarkable and you'll be hard-pressed to find too many other games of greater quality. An astonishing game that leaves all but the very best behind.

**10** Incredible. Everything went right during the creation of this game. A game receiving a perfect 10 does not necessarily mean it is perfect, likely just teasingly close, but to reserve 10s for THE perfect game is pointless. Instead, a 10 represents a game of gobsmacking brilliance, a game that stands high above the rest and a game that you cannot afford to ignore. A masterpiece.

## THE OPS AWARDS



**The Gold Award**  
is a rare gem and only to be given to games that score that magic 10/10. This score indicates gaming of simply incredible quality!



**The Silver Award**  
is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!



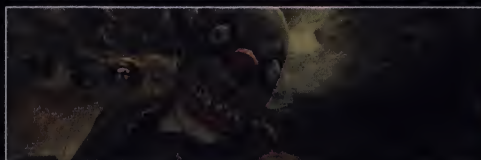
**The Bronze Award**  
is for games that score 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.

## OPS REVIEW SETUP



We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Bravia X-series for the best picture possible. This sucker melts eyeballs...

## INSIDE...



### CONDEMNED 2

A freakily gruesome slice of hobo life... – page 76



### DARK SECTOR

Lop off limbs for fun in *Dark Sector* – page 80



### ODIN SPHERE

Yet another classic for the PS2? – page 90



■ **GENRE:** SURVIVAL HORROR  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** MONOLITH  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SEGA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1 - 8  
■ **PRICE:** \$99.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** condemnedgame.com

■ **BACK STORY:** Survival horror has needed a quick injection of originality for a while now. Certainly *Resident Evil 5* and *Silent Hill 5* look amazing - but are simply prettier versions of previous entries. Is *Condemned 2* more? Read on for the gory story...

■ "You like stackin' chairs? Me too!"



# CONDEMNED 2

Survival horror goes next gen and scares us up a classic

PlayStation  
**SILVER  
AWARD**  
9/10

**C**ondemned 2 is a difficult game to review. We could run a laundry list of the awesome, unexpected, horrific and surprising moments... but then when you play the game you'll be ready for them. It's a catch-22, a paradox, a Rubik's Cube and, um... a Donkey Kong. Possibly. So in the interests of non-game-spoilers we suggest that anyone who likes the look of the screenshots turn

a few pages and check out the score. And then, you know, buy the game.

Survival horror fans, folks who like those CSI-type shows and people who just like the idea of beating people's brains out with bricks; don't really need to read further. Buy the game, write in and tell us how right we were.

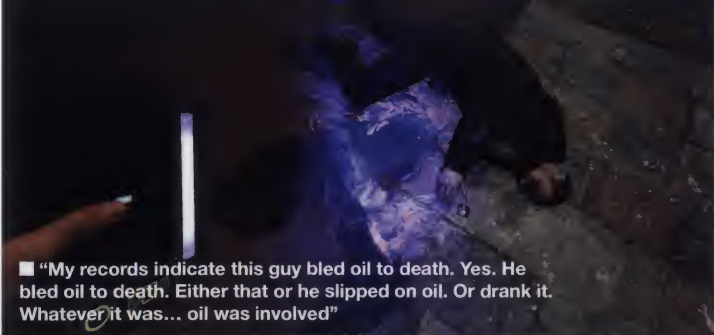
Last warning...

Okay, those of you who need


convincing - or just something lengthy to read on the toilet - here's *Condemned 2*! Again, there will be spoilers. You have been warned.

**DETAILS OF DOOM!**  
*Condemned 2* (known as *Condemned 2: Bloodshot* in some regions) is a





■ "My records indicate this guy bled oil to death. Yes. He bled oil to death. Either that or he slipped on oil. Or drank it. Whatever it was... oil was involved"



■ The humble dog: man's best friend. Sometimes

game played in the first-person view. Note we didn't say first-person shooter. That's for two reasons. 1) You don't actually do an enormous amount of shooting, relying more on heavy objects, bricks, swords, pipes, explosive dolls (yep, we said it - you read it, but more on that later) and your grimy, bandaged fists, and 2) That would give an incorrect impression of this multifaceted, intricate and deeply disturbing journey through the dark bowers of man's domain. This isn't a shooter. It's a survival horror/forensic investigation/fevered nightmare... game. They broke the mould when this baby flopped out onto the dirt, screaming and mewling. Make no mistake - even by our jaded standards this game is scary, nasty and impossible to forget. It's utterly horrific. In a good way.

#### "THE NAME'S THOMAS, ETHAN [BURP] THOMAS!"

The prequel to this game, *Condemned: Criminal Origins*, was a mix of *Silence of the Lambs* and other serial killer flicks like *Seven* and *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*. It came out for the 360 and PC and got a lot of reviews saying, "great atmosphere, could have used a little more action", or words to that effect. *Condemned 2* comes good on that - as you'll barely get a moment to breathe before the shit starts hitting various fans.

As with the first game, you play the part of FBI agent Ethan Thomas. Thomas is a damaged man. He sees things in the Special Crimes Unit that no one should. And after the events of the previous game the dude has lost the plot. He's an alcoholic. When heavy shit goes down some people turn to the Bible, others to

friends and some - to the bottle.

Ethan's picked the latter option.

He's a drunk. And not in a 'sing a bawdy sea shanty, burp and fall over' kind of way (like Naz). No, Ethan favours sinking into the murkiest, darkest alley he can find and drinks until he passes out in a pool of his own urine and flop sweat (also like Naz).

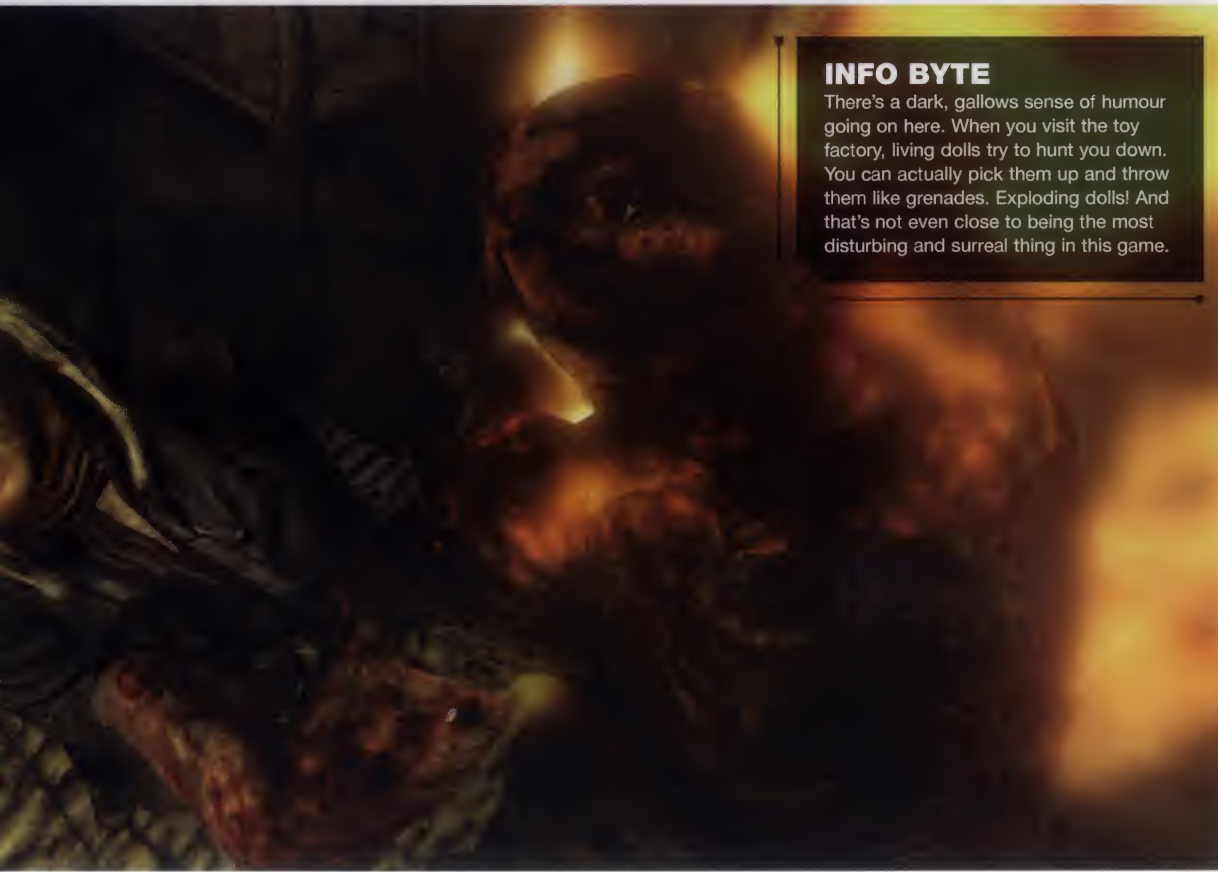
The game begins with you coming to in a rat-infested alley. For reasons that become clear later, the FBI wants you back on the case. It looks like the serial killer whose face was blown off in the first game is back and something is sending the people in the streets crazy. Violent, muttering, yowling crazy. Your job is to get to the bottom of the mystery. The problem? You're detoxing from the demon drink (see the boxout). In fact if you don't drink regularly you start hallucinating and twitching. Not very good if you're holding a gun or a crossbow. So, in short - you have to investigate a series of murders in the worst places imaginable, all the while looking for your next drink and constantly slipping into a nightmarish alternate reality where black slime oozes over everything and tar-like men and monsters claw at you with their moist, sticky hands.

#### IN THE GUTS! IN THE FACE!

The immersive quality of *Condemned 2* hits you from the first moment. This is a true view from inside Ethan's skull. You can look down and see your feet, you can punch and see your fists fly into the faces of your enemies and when you do things like clamber over obstacles, sprint or get knocked over you see your body as you would in real life.

The impact of this true first-person POV is indelible. Once you've worked out the controls and are sucked into the story, it feels like you're 'there'.

There are various modes of gameplay. The first one you'll encounter is simple: 'fightin'. Five minutes into the game you run afoul of some rough looking chappies. They come at you, snarling like animals and you'd better get good at fighting



#### INFO BYTE

There's a dark, gallows sense of humour going on here. When you visit the toy factory, living dolls try to hunt you down. You can actually pick them up and throw them like grenades. Exploding dolls! And that's not even close to being the most disturbing and surreal thing in this game.

#### YOUR OWN PERSONAL DEMONS

Ethan Thomas isn't the first alcoholic character in a game, however the surreal way he deals with the "demon drink" is as dark and original as the rest of the game. Tuning certain televisions and radios your personal demon will haunt and taunt you. Eventually you'll have to fight it - literally battling your personal demons made flesh!







■ Where are those old *NBA Jam* commentators when you need them? "HE'S ON FIRE!"



■ "I'll blast you real good invisible demon guy"



quickly because this game has a steep learning curve. Even on the easy setting it's quite likely you'll get killed in this first fight. First Person Punching (er, FPP?) is hard, but once you get the hang of it you can unlock combos that include hugely powerful uppercuts, a rapid burst of one-two punches (by pressing **□** or **△** at the right time) and even the ability to grab your enemy by the neck and – looking for objects with skull icons – run over to said icon to unlock some savage animations.

These include smacking a door closed on someone's head, hurling them off something high and – a favourite around the office – smashing some punk's head through a window. The tougher antagonists won't necessarily be killed by this, as we found out the hard way. In a level where you're investigating a museum that's overrun by looters (most of them wearing armour nicked from a medieval exhibit) we caught up with a broadsword-toting baddie. After laying the beat down

"... the dude lunged back up, shards of glass sticking out of his face like corn chips in nachos!"

we managed to grab him and throw him headfirst through the glass of an exhibit. "That'll be it from him!", said we, mentally patting ourselves on the back when suddenly the dude lunged back up, shards of glass sticking out of his face like corn chips in nachos! Before we could react he skewered us good. Suffice to say getting used to the combat mechanic is a must. If you become too reliant on weapons you'll soon find yourself in a situation where there are none – or your weapon has broken – and that's a bad time for everyone.

#### UV LIGHTS: NOT JUST FOR FINDING SEMEN ANYMORE!

The other, more theoretical, type

of gameplay is when you slip into investigative, forensic mode. For instance: the hotel level. The hotel level was when the game started really kicking arse. The first level's a tad generic and bland – but keep on going. You'll find yourself thrashing through the snow, being chased by bears, inside a toy factory where the dolls are alive and... look, just trust us – this game has awesome level design, making each stage unique and self-contained so you can replay them and unlock more goodies like brass knuckles, a gun holster and certain abilities... (have you seen David Cronenberg's *Scanners*? Watch it – you'll get the idea) but we digress. The hotel level has you using all your forensic tools. These include a UV

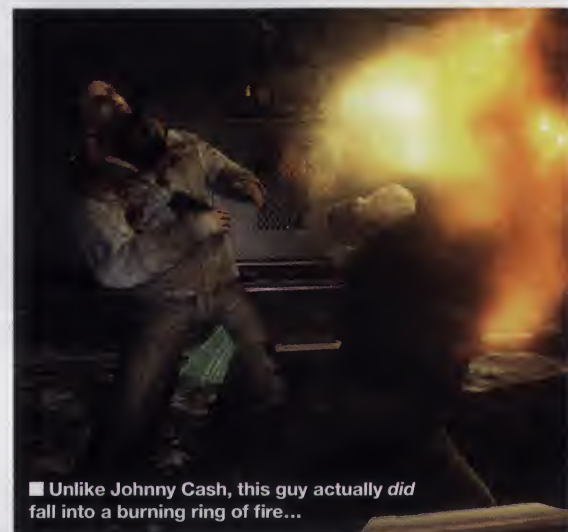
light for uncovering blood trails, a camera for uploading shots to your bosses, a GPS monitor that will help you reach your objective and a fourth device that helps you uncover the strange emitters that hurt your brain and seem to inspire random acts of violence. Using the UV light we followed the blood trail to the body. In investigative mode you are offered a series of choices. Do you think the body was killed and then moved? What weapon do you reckon was used? Is that big, bloody hole an entry or exit wound? And so on.

Depending on how perceptive you are you'll get a mark of either poor, good, very good or perfect. This will go towards your final score at the end of the level.

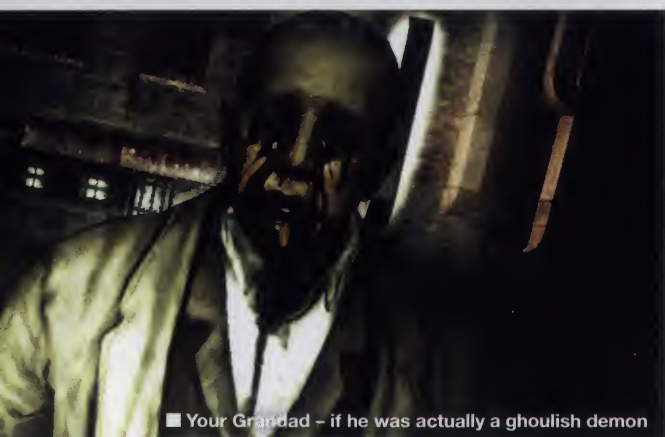




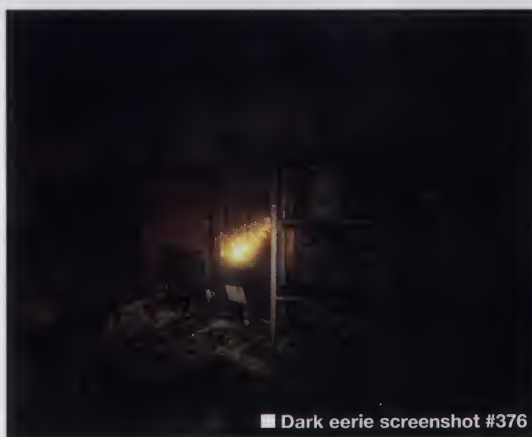
■ Hey freakish decayed man, how you doin'?



■ Unlike Johnny Cash, this guy actually did fall into a burning ring of fire...



■ Your Grandad – if he was actually a ghoulish demon



■ Dark eerie screenshot #376

Gold, silver and bronze awards will unlock all manner of cool things – faster combos, more accurate shooting, swifter fists, better equipment and so on.

The thing is, the game doesn't just stop when you're checking out the scene of the crime. The hotel doubles as a meth lab, so you'll have your share of shirtless, skeletal amphetamine tweekers – some with guns – to take care of. And they're not just going to wait there while you follow blood trails. So there's an almost unbearable sense of tension permeating any investigation.

#### HAS THE JURY REACHED A VERDICT?

There are so many amazing, original

moments in this game that we'd love to spill but shan't.

*Condemned 2* is a top shelf game. The graphics are beautiful and the character models solid and often very freaky. The plot is kind of a showbag of narratives cribbed from various horror/thriller/sci-fi movies – convoluted, sure, but utterly mesmerising. The only real issue is that some may find the game a tad hard. Sometimes the controls feel a trifle cumbersome (especially when you're running away from someone or something) which can often be frustrating but thankfully the multitude of checkpoints, and the ability to pick up almost anything and use it as a weapon, kind of balances things out.

*Condemned 2* takes everything that's good about a FPS and drags it, kicking and screaming, into a survival horror paradigm. Paired with the forensic investigation and lapses into alcohol-related delirium this is an harrowing and ultimately rewarding journey into the hell of men who've become monsters. Gripping stuff and well worth the price of admission. **Anthony O'Connor**

#### PROS:

- Compelling and original
- Great unexpected twists

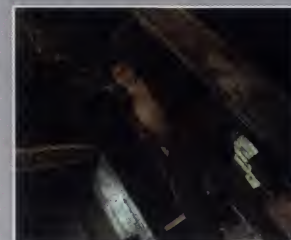
#### CONS:

- Controls feel cumbersome
- Textures can be inconsistent

**VERDICT:** We played *Condemned 2* with no expectations and were blown away.

#### AND YES, THERE'S MULTIPLAYER TOO!

We didn't get much of a chance to fully investigate the multiplayer, but we know it comes in a few modes like Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, Bum Rush – a time based game where SCU agents battle, well, bums. The bums respawn, you don't. So it's just a question of how long you can hold out. Crime Scenes – the 'influenced' hide evidence while SCU agents must use their forensic equipment to find it.



OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
**09**



■ **GENRE:** ACTION  
■ **RELEASE:** TBA  
■ **DEVELOPER:** DIGITAL EXTREMES  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** AFA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-10  
■ **PRICE:** \$99.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** www.darksector.com

■ **BACK STORY:** Little known fact: *Dark Sector* was originally intended to take place in a sci-fi environment, presumably in outer space, with players taking the role of a dude in a special mechanical suit with kick-arse abilities. Believe it or don't!

■ "Argh! Now my shirt's covered in blood! What's going to get that out?" "Club soda?" "Worth a try..."

## STOP PRESS!

AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRINT DARK SECTOR HAS BEEN REFUSED CLASSIFICATION BY THE OFLC. AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTOR AFA SAY THIS IS NOT THE END OF THE LINE FOR THE GAME, JUST A SIGNIFICANT BUT TEMPORARY SET-BACK. WE'LL BRING YOU AN UPDATE NEXT ISSUE.

# DARK SECTOR

Why mince words with communists? Just mince them...

**W**ell, it's official; your mum was wrong. Because, despite what she always told you, throwing razor sharp, self-returning objects at people is all fun and games – even more so when some poor bastard loses an eye, or a limb.

Like us, whoever planned *Dark Sector* has a serious love affair with *Predator* paraphernalia – in particular the scene in

*Predator 2* where the hunter unleashes the awesome force of his smart disc.

For the cinematically-challenged, Gary Busey's character is talking it up while freezing the Predator with a liquid nitrogen spray. The Predator wittily responds by hurling a ludicrously sharp disc that cleaves through several beef carcasses and ol' Gazza himself before coolly returning to its master's hand. This

truly epic encounter describes roughly ninety-percent of *Dark Sector's* combat. Honestly, if we were in marketing we would have titled this game *Dark Sector: Gigantic Frisbee of Severance*.

## MAN, SAILORS GET ALL THE NASTY INFECTIONS

The story of *Dark Sector* kicks off in 1987 in the coastal town of Lasria,

USSR, during the Cold War. A Soviet salvage team recovers the wreckage of a nuclear class submarine and unwittingly gets infected by a malignant virus which killed the original crew. Fast forward twenty years and we're introduced to our protagonist Hayden Tenno, a black-ops CIA agent sent into Lasria to spy on recent Soviet attempts to harness the bio-weapon potential of said virus.

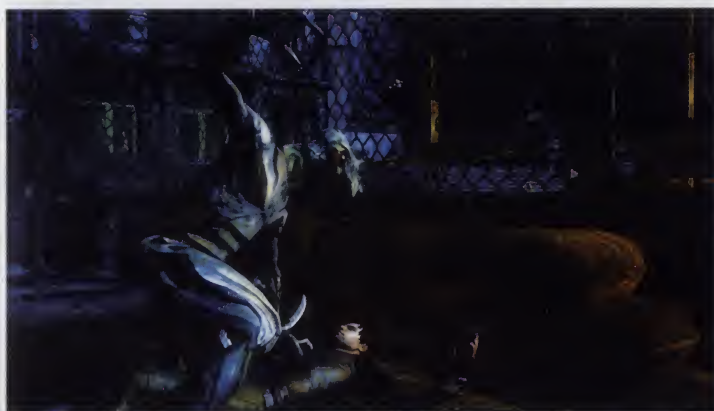




■ "Oh, you are so about to get 'glaived'"



■ "Excuse me dear fellow, could you direct me to the bathroom -" STAB!



■ "Honestly, I think its time to lay of the solariums dude."

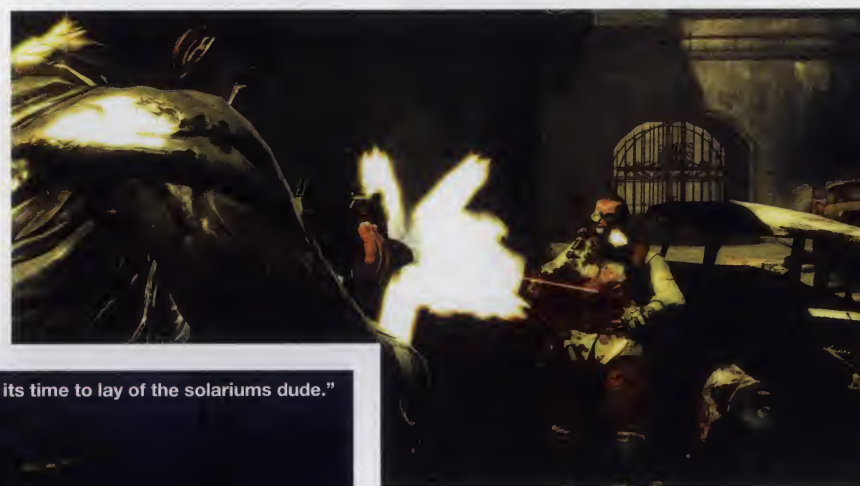
During this prologue mission everything is presented in a *Schindler's List* black-and-white style and Hayden has a cover and evasive roll system not unlike like the one in *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*. The similarities end here though, because the camera is positioned much closer over your shoulder, a'la *Resident Evil 4*, and you've got access to a camera shaking roadie run. But just as you're getting comfy with the rather uninspired controls and eliminating hordes of red communist soldiers – things take an unexpected turn for the surreal.

#### THE MACH 4 GLAIVE SHAVE: THE CLOSEST A MAN CAN GET

To cut a long story short, a mysterious nemesis rocks up and infects you with the aforementioned virus, and you awaken to discover that your right arm is now living metal tissue that can sprout a throwable three bladed glaive at will. Needless to say, targeting enemies with **[E]**, holding in **[E]** to build up power, and then unleashing this glaive will have horrendous effects on any fleshy object you choose to chuck it

at. We can't tell you how entertaining it is to heave this sucker at three guys, lop of one dude's arm, cleft the next victim in twain, and cop the last guy in the back of the head as the blade returns. The game still gives you access to rifles, and grenades; but the glaive really is the way to go because it evolves itself with new abilities like: mid-flight controllability in slow-motion, the capacity to be imbued with electricity or fire, or you can just use it to boomerang weapons to your hand.

When you mix these entertaining glaive antics in with the usual hopping-between-cover tactics – *Dark Sector* becomes an experience that is somewhat familiar, yet quite fresh. To capitalise on this uniqueness of the glaive, the game deliberately steers you away from using firearms by having all enemy weapons fitted with 'infection proximity detectors' – which basically render any salvaged guns useless after about thirty seconds. Apparently the traditional communist maxim of sharing everything equally doesn't apply to the mutated psychopaths of society.



#### OPS GOES MYTH BUSTING

Myth: did throwable weapons like the Glaive actually exist and get thrown in medieval times? The word 'glaive' is a French word that was derived from either the Latin 'Gladius' or Celtic 'Clavdivos' words for sword. The earliest use of the word glaive is in the 14th century and in the context they're referred to as boring, spear-like weapons. So unfortunately, as cool as they are, the myth of angry medieval folk Frisbeeing chunks of metal at one another – has been totally busted.



#### INFO BYTE

Hayden is voiced by Michael Rosenbaum; commonly referred to as that bald fellow who plays Lex Luthor in *Smallville*.



## PLAY NICE WITH YOUR ONLINE COMRADES, COMRADES

*Dark Sector* continued to impress us by having enough graphical grunt to make Mother Russia look like a MILF. It achieves this semi-impossible feat through Digital Extreme's proprietary Evolution engine which renders fantastic rain, fire and, smoke effects – plus it has a top-notch dynamic lighting system which looks amazing in the darker areas when items are crackling with electricity or your glaive is set ablaze.

These effects shine forth even more than usual because they appear in well planned set-piece levels that are a visual treat due to *Dark Sector*'s unique 'alternate technology' visual style. The best examples of this are the cool 'living-metal' super villains; plus the game features kick-arse weapons like futuristic shotguns, insanely powerful grenades that launch people through the air with exaggerated rag dolling, and a four legged walking tank called a Jackal – which can eventually be hijacked and

## EVEN BLOODY GAMES HAVE UNWANTED SPLASHBACK...

The biggest problem with *Dark Sector* is with that old chestnut – the camera. As we mentioned earlier the game tries very hard to emulate the tension of *Resident Evil 4* by mimicking its over-the-shoulder camera style. The problem is, when they ripped off the camera idea they forgot to rip off the ability to do a quick one-eighty turn to stop Soviet zombies biting you on the arse – which, disturbingly, they seem to *really love doing*. We could understand using this type of close camera to instill a sense of claustrophobic fear in players, but it's kinda hard to be fear the baddies when you're the biggest blade-carrying bad-arse in town.

Another annoying flaw is the way the game handles pickups, both in the singleplayer and multiplayer modes. Hayden doesn't automatically grab guns or even bullets that are lying around. Instead of automatically grabbing stuff; you literally have to line-up a crate, punch it open, and hold **△** for a second and



■ Consider yourself 'disarmed'... whammy!

commandeered to fulfill all of your dark chain-gunning, rocket launching desires.

For the deathmatchers amongst you, *Dark Sector* also sports a halfway decent multiplayer mode that supports 10 humans/bots duking it out in one of two game types: Infection (every quasi-metal freak for itself), or Epidemic (a team mode that pits two teams against one another to the death).

The pick of the bunch here has got to be the team mode; and this is mainly because the in-built cover system lends itself quite well to coordinating flawless pincer movements as a coherent force – as opposed to running about like random idiots blasting at each other.

All of the single player abilities are unlocked in multiplayer too, which make for some memorable friend beheading, weapon stealing moments – but unfortunately things aren't perfect with the multiplayer mode because *Dark Sector* has got itself some problems.

a half to score the ammo or the cash on offer. This sounds pretty minor, but when you multiply it across every pickup in the entire game, not to mention the importance of arming yourself quickly in multiplayer – it becomes a major pain in the arse. And let's face it, is there ever going to be a time when you'll want to be 'selective' about scooping up free shit?

Admittedly these faults won't ruin the experience for anyone; and on the whole we were completely blind-sided by the quality that *Dark Sector* exudes. It's one of those out-of-nowhere games that really does get cooler and cooler the more you play it. It's so much fun in fact, that if you told us to pick a fun activity for the afternoon and our only choices were between: chucking a *Dark Sector* disc into the PS3 for a quick play, or chucking a huge metal Frisbee with our mates inside our grumpy neighbour's greenhouse – we'd almost certainly choose both. **— Adam Mathew**



■ Dogs take note: do not play 'fetch' with this guy... what? Dogs can't read? Good point...



## DROPPING THE MEGATON

*Dark Sector* takes place during the Cold War, which was a period of tension between the US and the Soviet Union which spanned from the end of WWII up until the early 1990s. It was a pretty tense situation for the world that probably wasn't made happier when Soviet premier Nikita Krushchev addressed Western ambassadors with his famous phrase, "We will bury you". To his credit, Krushchev's tirade can be better translated as, "We will outlive you" – which is... uh... much... friendlier.



### PROS:

- The game looks a treat
- Glaive continues to evolve

### CONS:

- Odd clipping moment
- Controls need more polish

**VERDICT:** It's by no means perfect, but *Dark Sector* is a surprisingly solid third-person romp.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
**07**





PlayStation Portable

PlayStation 2



PIMPS  
BURN RUBBER  
GIMPS  
EAT DIRT

# ATV OFFROAD FURY

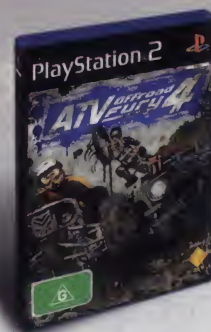
THE GREATER THE BETTER

It's not the winning that counts, it's the taking part.  
Break the rules, break some bones. Damage, destroy  
and demolish. Whatever it takes to be the last  
man standing.

[playstation.com.au](http://playstation.com.au)

PG

Mild coarse  
language



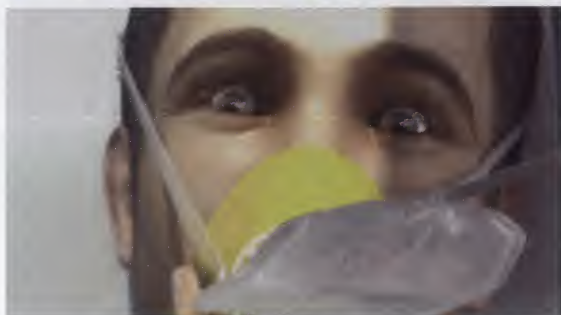


■ **GENRE:** ADVENTURE  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** UBISOFT MONTREAL  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT

■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **PRICE:** \$79.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** [lostgame.us.ubi.com](http://lostgame.us.ubi.com)

■ **BACK STORY:** Ubisoft, having sharpened its next gen teeth on a number of new IPs, has decided to cut off a hefty slice of licensed game pie with *Lost*. Can Ubi silence the critics with a solid conversion of the popular show?

■ Backpacks: necessary for 'adventurin'



# LOST

Previously on *Lost*...

**D**epending on who you talk to, *Lost* is either the greatest television show ever conceived, a half-decent pulpy mash-up of spooky sci-fi elements that lost its way mid-way through season 2, or a TV turd squeezed out randomly, one episode at a time, from the anus of hack JJ Abrams.

But regardless of how you judge the show itself, you'd be hard pushed to find anyone suggest that *Lost* would make a good video game. So much of the show's appeal lies in the sharp writing – the development of the characters, the show's flashback structure, and the ever present theme of faith versus science. The strength of *Lost* is undoubtedly its ability to hold back the big reveal, leaving

the audience to speculate, eventually answering questions whilst giving the audience more implausible scenarios to ponder. So, how in the blue hell do you translate that into a video game, and how does one make that fun?

We have no earthly idea. But Ubisoft, at least, has half a clue, attempting to capture the spirit of the show by transforming it into a quasi action-puzzle game of sorts – complete with the sort of chat and problem solving elements that were the staple of point-and-click adventure games back in the day.

It's an interesting direction, and one that mimics the pace of the show well. Players can take the time to chat to the islands inhabitants, ask them a number



■ Claire likes: giving birth and junkie ex-rockers



"Terry O'Quinn seems to have been replaced by a member of the southern gentry, drawling ominously like the all dancin' rootin' tootin' Texan cowboy from *The Simpsons*."



■ Why the hell is there a soundboard on the Island? Is there going to be a rockin' *Lost* concert? 'Cause that would be awesome

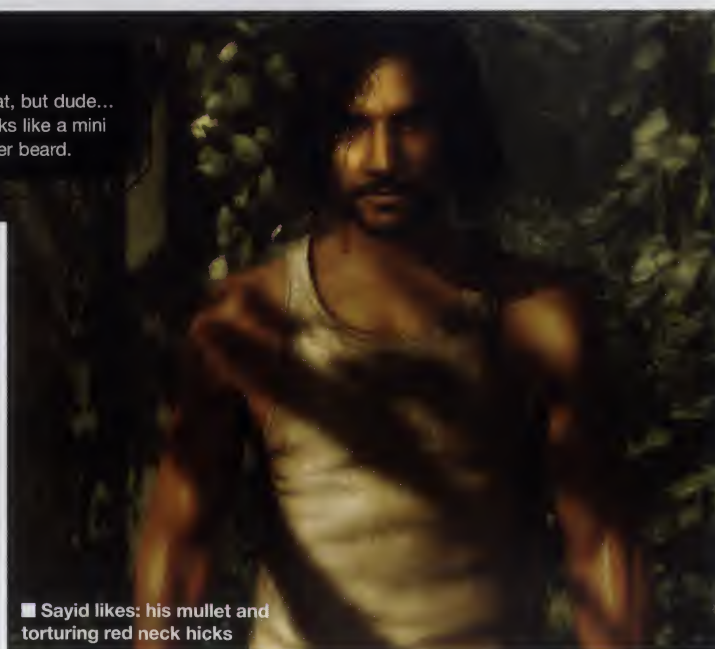


JACK:  
Until we know what we're dealing with, no one's going into the jungle.

■ Jack likes: ex-con hotties, fixing stuff and growing awesome beards...

## INFO BYTE

Okay, so we all know that Hurley is fat, but dude... he is just too fat in this game. He looks like a mini Jabba the Hutt – with a vaguely ginger beard.



■ Sayid likes: his mullet and torturing red neck hicks

### PROS:

- Character models are sweet
- Adventure aspect is solid

### CONS:

- Terrible voice acting
- Some performance issues

**VERDICT:** Some solid adventuring to be had but will probably frustrate fans of the show.

of (admittedly repetitive) questions, and navigate some of the more familiar settings from the show. So, in many respects, this game should have been a wet-dream for the hardcore fans who take pleasure in poring over each episode with a fine tooth-comb looking for clues of what's to come.

So it's a shame then that the house of cards built around this comforting familiarity is completely shattered by some truly hideous, ear drum straining voice 'acting'. Example: you run onto the iconic first scene from the show, the infamous airliner is strewn across the beach in tatters – just like the show. Jack is in the background giving CPR – just like the show. Hurley is standing inanimately, in a daze as the chaos unfolds – just like the show... awesome.

You rush up to Locke, with a nostalgic grin spread across your dial, ask him if he needs any help, then he replies. It all comes crashing down. What in the blue hell, you scream! That isn't John Locke! The iconic voice of Terry O'Quinn seems to have been replaced by a member of the southern gentry, drawling ominously like the all dancin' rootin' tootin' Texan cowboy from *The Simpsons*. Not good.

So yeah, maybe it was a bit much to expect that every member of the cast would contribute their voice to the video game, but it would have been nice to have some of the stalwarts on board. The acting talent of Terry O'Quinn is pivotal to the legitimacy of Locke's character, and the show as a whole. His presence, as well as the presence of most of the main cast members, is sorely missed.

This is compounded by the fact that, while the game's story roughly mimics

that of the show, you don't ever control Jack, Hurley, or Sawyer as you may have expected – you actually play as a random character with no relation to *Lost* whatsoever. This was obviously an attempt to give the player a fresh set of eyes with which to view the *Lost* universe, but instead it merely serves to remove you even further from the familiar events that occur throughout the game. Any legitimacy the game may have had is... er, 'lost' as a result.

Still, as a game it is functional, and has some genuine moments of quality and atmosphere. Heading through the caves in complete darkness, for example, with only a lit torch to assist you can often be thrilling.

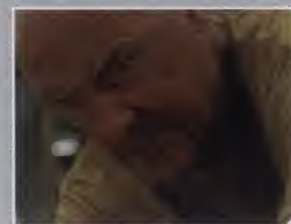
The dialogue mechanic is solid, and the trading system (where you can barter fruit, torches, or any object you find with other characters) is a nice touch. Attempts at working the (in)famous *Lost* 'flashbacks' into the game are a bit hit-and-miss, but serve as a genuine effort to innovate within the game's structure.

Other issues, however, drag the game back into the mire. Despite the fact that *Lost* shouldn't really be troubling the PS3 all that much, the game suffers from frequent screen tearing and frame rate issues. In addition, invisible walls seem to block your every move, which can be frustrating – especially when you're trying to avoid gunfire.

But given the tricky subject matter (it's difficult to imagine how this license could have been approached successfully) Ubisoft have to be applauded for the effort. Going down the slow paced adventure route seemed to make perfect sense under the circumstances, but in light of the poorly constructed story, and some ill-advised voice casting, *Lost* collapses under the weight of expectation. Sadly, the magic that makes the TV show so compelling is ultimately lost in translation. **— Mark Serrels**

## FLASHDANCE – UH, WE MEAN FLASHBACK

One of the more intriguing parts of *Lost* forces you back into the your characters past, a vague murky past where you have to take picture of a specific area at a specific time to somehow remember some important titbit of info. This photography business is completely trial and error stuff, rendering it a bit pointless and frustrating – but it's an interesting play on *Lost*'s flashback structure nonetheless.



OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
**06**



■ **GENRE:** FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** MIDWAY  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** RED ANT  
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-10  
■ **PRICE:** \$119.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** www.blacksitegame.com

■ **BACK STORY:** In military terminology a black site is a location at which a secret project is conducted. Blacksites are generally located outside of the mainland U.S. territory and, hence, outside legal jurisdiction. Ooh... scary!

# BLACKSITE

Chlorophyll? More like *Bore-a-phyll...*

**W**elcome to our paint-by-numbers art class! For those among you who didn't catch last year's memo, some of us voted to paint a 'First-Person Shooter' today. To keep things as plain and simple as humanly possible we've numbered the three main colours we'll be using today: One is for AI soldiers that say "hoo-rah" too much and shoot into walls occasionally, two is for the obligatory vehicle sections which handle dodgily, and three is for 'shoot-crap-and-do-bugger-all-else' levels. Grab a brush and make like Rembrandt!

Despite what that sarcastic introduction may suggest *Blacksite* shouldn't be quickly relabeled 'Blackshite' because it manages to have one or two redeeming features; firstly it has some decent action and secondly, an interesting

storyline. The plot opens in Iraq, 1991, where you're in command of a three man Delta squad that is deep behind enemy lines searching for a hidden chemical weapons bunker.

Fast-forwarding to the present day, you and your team are sent to Rachel, Nevada to investigate an insurgency. Military Intelligence soon proves its oxymoron status however, because the militia is actually some mutinous ex-MIA Marines who have been bio-engineered by the government.

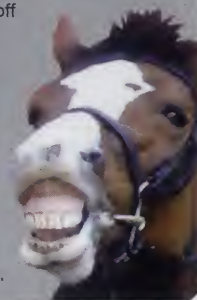
Unfortunately, this contemporary political satire plot is about as innovative as *Blacksite* gets. The rest of the game is standard first-person shooting fare. One so-called 'innovation' is having dynamic squad morale; the idea being if you suck your team won't be effective, but if you

rock they're much more aggressive. This quickly becomes a farce, however, because the squad AI is so unhelpful you won't even care if they need a backrub to make them shoot better.

We tried to like this game. The graphics are above average and there are some decent battle-chatter one-liners when Grayson calls his superiors 'cheese dicks'. The multiplayer seems solid enough too, but we were disappointed to see that the promised 16 player capability has been chopped to only 10 and the co-op campaign mode is suspiciously absent. This lends credence to the theory that *Blacksite* was a premature rushed job, and while it is by no means a *crap* game - it's a morbidly generic one, and your dinero would be better spent elsewhere. **Adam Mathew**

## HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

On November 29 2007, Harvey Smith, the game's designer, came out publicly to announce how ruined the game's development schedule was. He claimed the schedule caused low reviews due to the fact they were not able to test the game properly. Actually, Mr. Smith was a bit more vocal when describing the nightmarish development; he said it was "disastrously off rails", also "it went straight from alpha to final." and finally "[the] project was so f--ked up". Horse's mouth people... horse's mouth.



### INFO BYTE

Many level names are plays on speeches or comments made by members of the Bush Administration regarding the Iraq War.



■ Japanese Tentacle Porn: The Video Game



■ "You call that a one eyed monster?" (unzipping sound...)



### PROS:

- Decent graphics...
- Great one-liners

### CONS:

- Squad control is pointless
- Ho-hum gameplay

OFFICIAL SCORE:

**05**

**VERDICT:** A pretty, pedestrian shooter that needed some more time cooking in the lab.



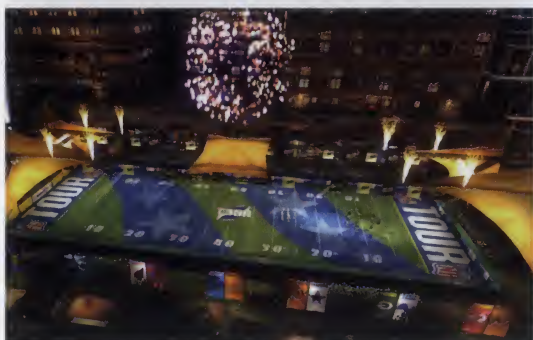
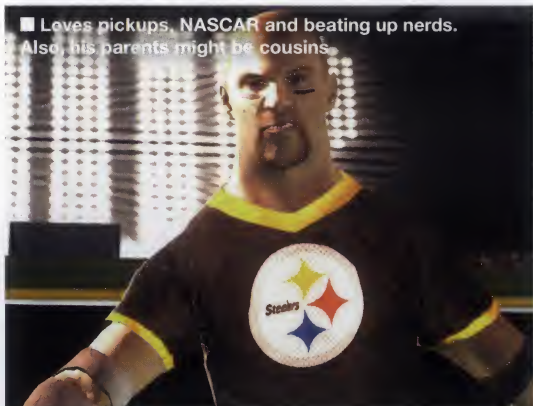
■ **GENRE:** SPORTS  
 ■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** EA TIBURON  
 ■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-4  
 ■ **PRICE:** \$99.95  
 ■ **HD:** 720p  
 ■ **WEB:** www.electronicarts.com.au

■ **BACK STORY:** *NFL Tour* is EA's replacement for *NFL Street* series, which boasts arcade style play, as you take your show on the road around the US of A. This is a stark contrast to the significantly more complex and realistic *Madden* series.

# PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **Leaves pickups, NASCAR and beating up nerds.**  
 Also, his parents might be cousins.



■ **"My secret? Velcro gloves..."**



## INFO BYTE

Usually dependable, EA Tiburon can add *NFL Tour* to its list of games to never be mentioned again... (yes, *Superman Returns*, we're talking to you)

# NFL TOUR

Flag on the play...

There are some games out there that are so freakin' awesome, the controller literally flies into your hands as you press start, and a crowbar and pallet of lube could not pry it out of your hands. Too much of it is never enough, and after five minutes you know this is going to be a classic. Then there are others that are painful. Games that make you want to hurl. Frequently. Games where you find yourself thinking *please* don't let me play this again... it hurts, bad. See what we're getting at? *NFL Tour* favours the latter and has taken a little shine off the usually robust EA line of NFL-inspired games.

Where do we start? Visually, it's dire. There's not a huge leap in the eye candy department from the previous *NFL Street* titles, with *NFL Tour* looking a smidge

above last generation, which ain't good. Remember all the crazy, outrageous moves they threw into the series? The momentum shifting Gamebreakers, those crazy aerial and acrobatic manoeuvres, wall runs, somersaults, backspins... they're all gone, replaced with some *really awesome button mashing* and SIXAXIS shaking. Very ordinary. Remember those crazy stadiums, ramps and street arenas? They're gone too. Instead, the matches take place in an indoor field, which is a cross between a hockey rink, and football field. It's almost like EA forgot what made the series so successful in the first place, and has given us a *Brady Bunch*, watered-down version that barely resembles it's predecessors.

Your main task is to create a character and assign him a look, build and position

then take him through a tournament, but once you take the field, the flaws become ridiculously apparent and are hard to endure. Your options are **T** for turbo and **R** for a pass, or reversal. That's it. Occasionally to mix it up you use the SIXAXIS to shake free of a defender, but this feels tacked on and lacks any real impact on the state of play. The worst offence takes place defensively. Instead of using the time honoured 'play-the-game-from-the-same-view' mechanic, EA has opted to switch it on defence, so you're actually downfield running towards your opponent. It feels like EA cut every corner and produced a bare bones rehash of the NFL to be quickly produced and cash in on the *Madden* fever that grips the US. It's poor form, and frankly, EA, you should know better. **Dave Kozicki**

## DO THA' MASH

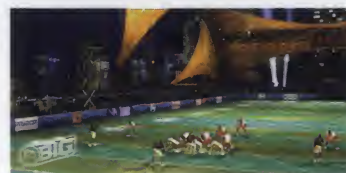
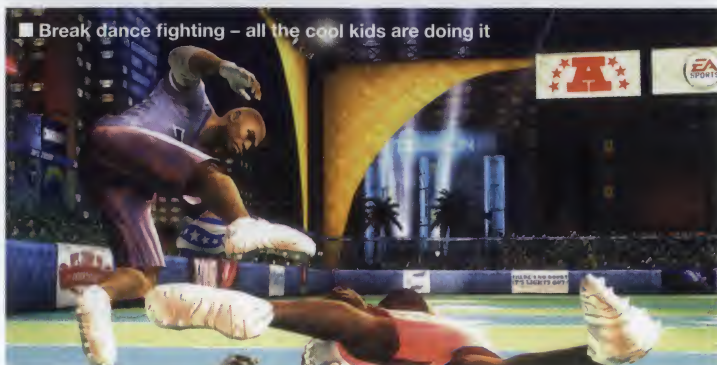
Sadly the entire premise of *NFL Tour* eventually comes down to monster mashing the buttons. It seems that EA Tiburon has really broken the mechanics down to basics and the result is callused thumbs and RSI wrist injuries. Whether on offence or defence tapping **R** when the opposition approaches triggers a reversal and shaking the SIXAXIS...er, shakes off or slips you past defenders. The game reverts to a simple button-bashing affair with none of *NFL Street*'s trademark flair.



OFFICIAL  
SCORE:

04

■ **Break dance fighting - all the cool kids are doing it**



## PROS:

- Easy to play
- Immediate accessibility

## CONS:

- Boring gameplay
- Backwards defence

**VERDICT:** Pick any other game with NFL in its title over this garbage.



■ **GENRE:** ACTION  
■ **RELEASE:** MARCH 2008  
■ **DEVELOPER:** OMEGA FORCE  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** THQ

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2  
■ **PRICE:** \$89.95  
■ **HD:** 720p  
■ **WEB:** www.koei.com

■ **BACK STORY:** Omega Force has produced every game in the *Dynasty Warriors* series, which began life in 1997, while also managing to pump out *Samurai Warriors* games and last year's decent *Bladestorm*. They're busy chaps.

# DYNASTY WARRIORS 6

War, what is it good for? Sequels, since you asked...

**C**ompared with the winds of change that blew through Koei's *Bladestorm*, where real-time strategy and hack/slash action combined to give us a remarkably fresh kind of game, *Dynasty Warriors 6* is dull and a little conservative.

There are a few changes to the *DW* mix, with a so-called Renbu system that enables (in theory) infinite combos, and there's improved AI in the game's enemies, but underneath it's still the same old *Dynasty Warriors* template: one character hacking through hundreds to get to a boss, and the story progressing after each boss is defeated. Which is great, if you like this sort of thing.

The length of the game is key here, because *Dynasty Warriors* is the type of experience you'll want to dig into – if you

enjoy the concept – for many hours. True to form, in *DW6* even the initial stages take an hour or so to play through. But there are only 19 levels to play through, so if you do the maths you'll see that it falls some way short of previous *Dynasty Warriors* games' standards of longevity.

Still, even though the game isn't quite as meaty as we'd like it to be, it does look significantly prettier than past *DW* games. The game runs at 60fps all the way, ensuring that the controls feel sharp and always satisfy.

Aside from the slightly disappointing two-player game, there's also a Free Mode, where you can play through unlocked stages as you like, without having to sit through the cutscenes that tie the main game together. Story Mode is inevitably where most of your

time will be spent, though, and it's also the most rewarding feature of the game – characters and armies are introduced with stadium rock levels of ceremony, supported by hyper-dramatic voiceovers and cheese guitars. *DW6* is largely historical, but it's not at all dry.

It's tricky to know whether to recommend *Dynasty Warriors 6*. We like it, but if you didn't get on with previous *DW* titles, probably not enough has been changed for you to feel differently.

If you enjoy the series, though, *Dynasty Warriors 6* presents the best example of the formula yet, with strong enemy AI and an extended combo system. And for those of you who've never played a *Dynasty Warriors* game, well, this one is as satisfyingly hectic as the rest of them. **Jonti Davies**

## (NOT MUCH) FUN FOR 2

There's a split-screen two-player mode here, but it gets tired very quickly. It's also a bit difficult to see the full scale of what's happening because of the letterbox format. And the only network feature here is a score ranking system, where you can compare your kill counts and time attack records with those of other players around the world. We really hope that Omega Force comes up with a more imaginative and ambitious multiplayer game in the inevitable *Dynasty Warriors 7*.



■ Beards: we asked for more in videogames, and we got 'em



### PROS:

- Solid challenge
- A rock 'n' roll take on history

### CONS:

- Soon becomes repetitive
- No online multiplayer

**VERDICT:** *Dynasty Warriors* fans will be happy with this version's expanded take on war.

**OFFICIAL SCORE:**  
**07**



**NO SUBSCRIPTIONS!**

## Top Games



GAME302



GAME303



GAME304



GAME305



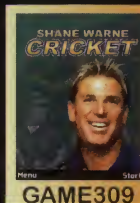
GAME306



GAME307



GAME308



GAME309



GAME310



GAME311



GAME312



GAME313

## WORLD POKER TOUR® TEXAS HOLD 'EM 2



GAME301

### World Poker Tour® Texas Hold 'Em 2

brings you all the exhilaration and excitement of the real thing. The dizzying highs, the terrible lows. Bring on the river and we're "All-In!" without the worry of losing watches, jewellery or the shirt off your back.

## Sport



GAME314



GAME315



GAME316



GAME317

## Puzzle/Strategy



GAME318



GAME319



GAME320



GAME321



GAME322



GAME323



GAME324



GAME325



GAME326



GAME327



GAME328



GAME329



GAME330



GAME331



GAME332



GAME333

## Action



GAME334



GAME335



GAME336



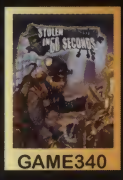
GAME337



GAME338



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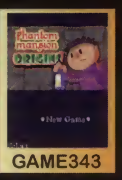
GAME340



GAME341



GAME342



GAME343



GAME344



GAME345

**TXT CODE TO 191623\***

Example  
TXT **GAME301**  
TO 191623\*

\* You will be charged \$0.55 for every message sent to 191 623 and \$6.60 for each game purchased. No game content provided after 9:00am AEST on 21.04.08. Your operator may charge for data transactions according to your service agreement. Service is subject to GPRS coverage, handset compatibility & network availability. Handset must be WAP & GPRS enabled. Under 15 you need the account holder's permission. Full terms, conditions & handset compatibility at [www.mad4games.com.au/tandcs/opsm0408.html](http://www.mad4games.com.au/tandcs/opsm0408.html). You will receive marketing messages via SMS. Help at [www.mad4games.com.au](http://www.mad4games.com.au), [info@mad4games.com.au](mailto:info@mad4games.com.au) or 1300 854 244. Available on Australian networks: Telstra, Optus, Vodafone & Virgin Mobile.

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■ **GENRE:** RPG  
■ **RELEASE:** MARCH 08  
■ **DEVELOPER:** SQUARE ENIX  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT

■ **PLAYERS:** 1  
■ **PRICE:** \$99.95  
■ **HD:** \$69.95  
■ **WEB:** [www.odinsphere.eu.com](http://www.odinsphere.eu.com)

■ **BACK STORY:** *Odin Sphere* is one of many 'Japan only' RPGs that are finally starting to trickle down to our region. It's a damn shame we only get to taste the best of what Japan has to offer at the end of the PS2's lifespan.

■ "Help! I'm fighting the horsey guy from chess!"



# ODIN SPHERE

Kinda like *Dark Stalkers*, RPG-style


PlayStation  
SILVER  
AWARD  
9/10

With so many games going for flash over substance nowadays, it's a real treat to have a lash at something that takes it back to basics and gets it right. No sleight of hand tricks, just a well thought out, supremely crafted piece of interactive entertainment.

We've seen a lot of RPGs in our time, so why does *Odin Sphere* stand out from the crowd? For starters, it breaks the classic RPG mould. Instead of giving you a party of characters to switch through, each of the five characters' adventures

you play are contained in a volume of a book being read by a typically anime little girl. Each book has a different perspective, so the story unfolds, *Rashomon*-style, as we see how each character's actions impact the overall storyline. Oh yeah, it's also a 2D side scrolling RPG. Sound cool? A little different? You bet your arse it is!

We kick off with Volume One, 'Valkyrie'. A terrible battle has ensued, and a tussle with the famed Shadow Knight has claimed the life of your sister Griselda. She entrusts you with her mighty spear

and asks you to carry on her fight, and prays your father, King Odin (yes, it's *that* Odin), will be proud of her exploits, now that she is passing into the afterlife. Before you can say, "Great Odin's raven!" (sorry... couldn't resist) you're off to slice and dice the enemy. Combat is fairly basic, with a series of attack combos unleashed when you hit , coupled with jumping and gliding attacks. Stronger attacks can be used sparingly to conjure up mini cyclones and other unnatural forces of nature. But, before this degenerates into a button



■ Watcha cooking Papa Smurf?



■ Strange blue light coming from nowhere. Horse-man statue with a blue ball on its head. Yep. It got weird



■ "Well, you can start by explaining why there's pink hair in my goddamn entrée for starters!"





## “Different? You bet your arse it is!”

bashing horror story, *Odin Sphere* creates an innovative way to bring a little strategy to the RPG. It's called the POW meter.

### WOULD YOU LIKE MORE?

To keep you on your toes, in the top left corner is a POW meter. Each time you attack, it drains a bit off the meter. Attacking hard and fast will quickly empty the bar and your character suffers from fatigue and gets dizzy, taking them out of the action. It's a fantastic little idea, and really changes your tactics. Instead of rushing headlong into a battle, you find yourself sizing up the opposition first, looking at the defensive position. Are they attacking from the air or are they in a defensive position on the ground? It adds incredible depth to a simple scrolling format, as each battle has a different flavour to the last. As you take down the enemy troops in your bid to unravel the secrets behind the Crystallization Cauldron, the speed at which you despatch your would-be attackers can lead to big rewards. With a quick take down, enemies cough up goodies or flashing treasure chests (no... we're not talking about Scarlett Johansson's boobies). They disappear if you don't crack them open in time, and their bounty is lost. As you clear each stage, you're given a score based on speed, damage taken, and so on. The better your score on each level, the greater the treasure you receive at the end. It's just like getting your holiday loading on top of your regular pay, a little bonus to keep you satisfied and offers incentive to take it up a notch next round.

### YOU GO THIS WAY, I'M GOING THAT WAY

As you knock out a level, you reach an exit sign that leads you to the next battle. This is where it gets interesting. The

storyline branches in several directions from here (via the map) and you can take any branch you'd like. The neat thing about the map is that it shows you exactly what you're in for. Each level has a star rating for how difficult your enemies are, what rewards you'll receive after your skirmish and even if it's a mini boss or boss battle. We love it. You can level up, do one section, go back, try a harder branch to get greater rewards...it's a bee-yoo-ti-fully executed idea.

### FEEL THE AWESOME!

There's so much on offer here it's hard to jam it into one review, so here's some of the cooler moments. Fallen enemy soldiers souls transform into phozons which you can absorb for XP, you can get into basic alchemy and cooking – food and health are very important and you actually gain XP the more you eat! The sheer sense of scale is also overwhelming, with Odin taking up nearly half the screen – but it's not just he who dwarfs you. Your first major boss is a massive dragon that envelops the whole screen. The ground tremors as he approaches and his look is exceptionally detailed for flat graphics. Ahh...the look of the game. We can't go on enough about it. Ridiculously out of proportion characters with massive upper bodies and little chicken legs below, every female character has an inherent sexuality to them, the Valkyries look like they're wearing French maid's outfits, the Forest witches have their long dresses hiked up at the front to show off garter belts and suspenders,

### INFO BYTE

This is the first RPG this reviewer can remember that has difficulty settings for added replay-ability. If we're wrong, Naz will send you a cheque for ten dollars (or not, probably).

wizards look like a classic wizened old bastard should, down to the bushy beard and pointed hat. We know we're raving on, but it's rare that a RPG takes you somewhere you didn't expect, and this one does it constantly, with its tongue planted firmly in its cheek, and never to the detriment of gameplay. RPG fans... look no further. **— Dave Kozicki**

### WHAT'S THE SCORE?

One of the many things that separate an RPG by Square Enix is tone. So many cutesy Japanese based RPGs have sickly sweet background tracks that sound like they're dipped in treacle. They're cartoonish, childish and somewhat annoying after a while. Whilst it may look like a title for kiddies, the solid orchestral score (by Hiroshi Sakimoto who also scored *FFXII*) and haunting melodies that accompany, create a grander scale and give off the illusion of a much more serious epic.



### PROS:

- 2D scrolling action RPG...
- Feels old school

### CONS:

- ...shh...we're still playing we'll get back to you...

**VERDICT:** We give major points for style, and this puppy as got it in spades.

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
**09**



■ **GENRE:** ONLINE ACTION-RPG  
■ **RELEASE:** NOW  
■ **DEVELOPER:** SONIC TEAM  
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SEGA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-6 (ONLINE)  
■ **PRICE:** \$79.95  
■ **HD:** 576i  
■ **WEB:** www.sega.com

■ **BACK STORY:** Sega's *Phantasy Star* series began way back in 1987 on the Sega Master System – the same year *Final Fantasy* debuted. Despite this, *Phantasy Star* has never really had the clout of *Final Fantasy*.

# PHANTASY STAR UNIVERSE: AMBITION OF THE ILLIMUNIUS

Oooh, online phantasies...

Officially touted as a sequel to last year's gargantuan *Phantasy Star Universe*, this is essentially a stand-alone expansion pack packed with the kind of content you'd well expect from a proper follow-up. It's a good thing too, because RPG boffins unfamiliar with the online-centric original will be able to jump right in and get to grips with things straight away.

A cool new addition that'll fill you with joy from the get-go is the greatly expanded character customisation. There are four races to pick from and a plethora of physical (and fashionable) variables to tinker with. Hair, helmets, eyes, hairstyles, skin tone, voice, stature, clothes and colouration, it's all there and it's just about impossible to come up with exactly the same character as someone else. The obvious setback is that throughout the offline adventure your onscreen hero

never utters a word, which is always a bit of a vibe-breaker. Still, you're unique, and the other kids are jealous.

The dealio is that you're a raw recruit to the Guardians, a troupe of elite operatives who blast around the troubled Gurhal System solving intergalactic problems solvable by lone guns.

In *Phantasy Star Universe*, heroic spaceman Ethan Warber was the hero and your avatar stood aside while he saved the universe, but not this time. Now you're centre-stage, which makes tramping through the mission-based storyline in a bid to finally rid the place of pesky alien invaders SEED a lot more engaging than it was previously. Unfortunately, there's a fair bit of extrapolation on *PSU*'s online plot and a lot of the refinements that the real-time combat system that should've been made, have been ignored.

Plus your allies are still useless in a fight (they don't seem to understand 'help me out', but are fine with 'do bugger-all nothing') crafting is still a taxing experience, and your weapons still only regenerate (essentially, how much you can use 'em) when they're actually equipped, which is a huge, unnecessary pain in the anus if you ask us.

Lining up an enemy in combat also remains a little tricky, and if your character is of the trigger-happy variety, get used to putting holes in cavern walls and not in the opposition.

Regardless of these critical niggles going unimproved, there's a heaping shedload of new levels and cities (even returning ones are cool the second time around), weapons, stages and supporting characters to keep you squishing pushy extraterrestrials for as long as you so desire. **Toby McCasker**

## RACE YA

There are four races kicking around *PSU*'s cosmos and it's not nearly big enough for any of them. The Humans are your bog-standard average lot who tend to be comfortable but not particularly excellent in any respect, the Newmans are lightning-quick psychic space-elf types with little in the way of muscle, Beasts are ferocious animal-esque beings who can transform into imposing fanged creatures later in their lifespan, and the coolest crew of them all are the CASTs: killer robots from outer space handier with insanely huge, destructive, ranged weaponry.



### INFO BYTE

He might've gone mental and had a go at topping the President at the end of *PSU*, but that's not the last you'll hear from Ethan Warber, oh no...

■ "Shut up! My sword is nothing like a lightsabre! Mine's is pointy at the end! Just shut up everybody!"



■ The sun shines out of this guys arse – literally



### PROS:

- Character customisation
- Killer robots from space!

### CONS:

- No real improvements
- PS2's online service is weak

OFFICIAL  
SCORE:  
**07**

**VERDICT:** While lacking much-needed refinements, this is still a quality action-RPG.



■ "You idiot! It's a total fire ban, and you're casting flame spells!"





When I realised I'd rather  
watch Blu-ray movies on PS3  
than speak to Alan, I knew it  
was time to move on. Again...

X

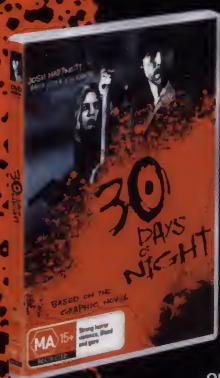
# SUPER SEXY GEAR EACH MONTH IN T3





# FILM

Josh Hartnett is afraid of the dark in *30 Days of Night*, Jerry and Ben Stiller are father and son in *The Heartbreak Kid*, Schwarzenegger belts Blu-ray with *Commando* and *Predator*, plus much more!



## DVD OF THE MONTH

### 30 DAYS OF NIGHT (MA15+)

■ **STARRING:** Josh Hartnett, Melissa George

■ **DIRECTOR:** David Slade

*30 Days of Night* was originally a failed movie pitch. Whoever got the pitch gave it the arse so co-creators Steve Niles and Aussie illustrator Ben Templesmith turned it into a three issue comic book series.

The concept is really cool: y'see certain places in Alaska have seasons where the sun doesn't appear for thirty-plus days. People tend to go a bit mental during these dark periods even without any outside influence, so chucking a cadre of vampires into the mix would surely create tense toothy, gory gold, right?

Well, the comic book was

certainly bristling with energy and splattery horror, however the movie just feels... flat. Templesmith's funny book vampires had huge, exaggerated fanged maws for mouths, something that the movie vamps do not. However the special effects aren't what sinks *30 Days*, it's the sheer lack of tension, excitement or, frankly, anything. Characters are barely introduced before they're dispatched in fairly generic vampire movie ways. and the only real memorable actors are Melissa George and Josh Hartnett. And the reason they're memorable is because they seem to doing their best to suck harder than the bloody vampires!

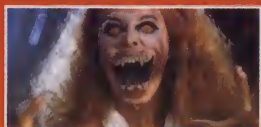
George looks bored and delivers lines like she's ordering a pizza and Hartnett appears to think dialogue is best delivered in a barely audible mumble.

**VERDICT:** All the pieces are in place, but a distinct lack of, well, any atmosphere or scares leave the viewer with a big pile of "meh". *30 Days of Night* is a good comic book, but as a film... well, maybe there was a good reason the pitch was rejected.

★★★



## 5 VAMPIRE MOVIES THAT ARE BETTER THAN THIS ONE



**FRIGHT NIGHT:** This long ignored '80s classic – and it's lesser sequel – was a hoot and a holler. A teenager thinks the man next door may just be a creature of the night. Of course, no one believes him. When will people learn? Teenagers know EVERYTHING!



**NEAR DARK:** A vamp flick where the "V" word is never used. However there are awesome shoot outs and one of the greatest bar 'fights' ever put on the silver screen. Also Bill Paxton gets hit by a truck and a little boy vampire explodes. Need we say more?



**JOHN CARPENTER'S VAMPIRES:** Arguably veteran director Carpenter's last good flick, we have James Woods being, well, hard as he and his band of vamp slayers, get drunk, sex up some prozzies and kill vampires. Woods actually uses some sassy one-liners.



**FROM DUSK TILL DAWN:** Half gritty crime flick, half insane – like bull goose loony – vampire movie. Cameos by everyone who has been in seventies exploitation movies, including FX maestro Tom Savini as Sex Machine (who has a crotch-mounted gun).



**CRONOS:** Before *Pan's Labyrinth*, before *Blade 2* and before *Hellboy* – nutty director Guillermo Del Toro made this bizarre vampire flick about a little machine that, well, makes you live forever. Subtle and surreal this is a great film to see how Del Toro has developed.



# COMEDY

## THE HEARTBREAK KID (MA15+)

■ **STARRING:** Ben Stiller, Michelle Monaghan, Malin Akerman, Jerry Stiller.  
■ **DIRECTOR:** The Farrelly Brothers



It's the classic story of boy (40-year-old bachelor Eddie) meets girl (hot-as-hell Lila) and finds out she's everything he ever wanted. They get married, and at once realises

he and his wife are completely incompatible in every single way. Throw in the unattainable Miranda, some sexual tension and you've got a classic love triangle filled with awkward situations and uncomfortable moments, most of them making the audience squirm... for all the wrong reasons.

**VERDICT:** The Farrellys have struggled in recent times, and this falls very wide of the mark. The brilliant rapport and comic timing between the Stillers, as sex-crazed father and neurotic son, almost save it.

★★★

# ANIME

## BLACK LAGOON (M)

■ **STARRING:** Brad Swaile, Maryke Hendrikse, Dean Redman  
■ **DIRECTOR:** James Corrigan



What do a kidnapped errand boy with major Stockholm syndrome issues; an erratic group of mercenaries, the Russian Mafia and a Japanese Corporation all have in common? Who cares? Just sit back relax and enjoy the ride! After being hung out to dry by his company, Rock joins Lagoon Company as they take to the high seas for some modern day piracy. Run by the man mountain Dutch, there's no job too small for his unique delivery service. Now all Rock has to do is stay on the good side of Revy, Dutch's smoking hot, pistol-packing psycho of a lieutenant.

**VERDICT:** A great little action comedy in the tradition of *Lupin the Third* and *Cowboy Bebop*, with more than enough out of control, unapologetic, unabashed gunplay to sate the most hardcore junkie.

★★★★★

# COMEDY

## FUTURAMA: BENDER'S BIG SCORE (MA15+)

■ **STARRING:** Billy West, Katey Sagal, John DiMaggio  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Dwayne Carey-Hall



After realising it's stupidity, Fox brought this fan favourite back from the dead in a series of four direct-to-DVD releases. The first reunites our heroes in their darkest hour. A mysterious tattoo of Bender on Fry's ass could mean the end of life, as we know it! Guffaws abound with time paradoxes, the Harlem Globetrotters, a decapitated Hermes, Barbados Slim, Zap Brannegan, Kif, the Robot Mafia (give 'em the clamps! Clamps!), Santa, Elzar and many more, all taking their chances against a strange race of aliens with weirdly engorged glands.

**VERDICT:** A fitting return for one of TV's most underrated and unappreciated shows.

★★★★★

## COMMANDO (M)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Mark L. Lester  
■ **STARRING:** Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rae Dawn Chong, Alyssa Milano



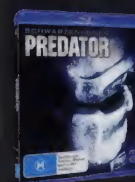
When the daughter of a former elite soldier is kidnapped so he'll co-operate, he promptly goes on a swift killing rampage to get her back instead.

**VERDICT:** One of the best action flicks of the '80s, full of one-liners.

★★★★★

## PREDATOR (M)

■ **DIRECTOR:** John McTiernan  
■ **STARRING:** Arnold Schwarzenegger, Carl Weathers, Bill Duke, Jesse Ventura



Schwarzenegger takes on an intergalactic nasty intent on ripping his team of commandos apart one-by-one. If you've never seen it, you suck.

**VERDICT:** Classic sci-fi and one of the best Schwarzenegger flicks ever.

★★★★★

## MONTY PYTHON'S LIFE OF BRIAN (MA15+)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Terry Jones  
■ **STARRING:** Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Michael Palin



The hilarious story of the life and times of Brian, born in the stable next-door to Jesus. Easily the most popular of the Python movies.

**VERDICT:** Perfect comedy that more than stands the test of time.

★★★★★

## INDEPENDENCE DAY (M)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Roland Emmerich  
■ **STARRING:** Will Smith, Bill Pullman, Randy Quaid, Robert Loggia, Jeff Goldblum



Wisecracking black guy and wisecracking Jewish guy take on some dangerous aliens and save the world with the help of Bill Paxton Pullman.

**VERDICT:** Looks good. Still silly.

★★★

THE MANSION USED IN THE FINAL BIG SHOOT OUT BETWEEN MATRIX AND ARIUS IS ACTUALLY THE SAME MANSION USED FOR THE FINAL SHOOT OUT BETWEEN AXEL FOLEY AND VICTOR MAITLAND IN BEVERLY HILLS COP.

# ANIME

## GHOST IN THE SHELL: STAND ALONE COMPLEX INDIVIDUAL ELEVEN (M)

■ **STARRING:** Alison Matthews, David Kaye, Trevor Devall  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Kenji Kamiyama



Based on the groundbreaking manga by Masamune Shirow, *Individual Eleven* is the latest movie length instalment in the long running

*Stand Alone Complex* series. Set in the aftermath of World War Four, against a background of civil unrest, a mysterious organization begins to gain momentum, garnering a strong following in the refugee sectors. It's charismatic and capable leader, Kuze, calls for an uprising. Revolutionary or terrorist? It's not that simple, and nothing is black or white and as things come to a head.

**VERDICT:** Strangely compelling, the political intrigue is beautifully offset by balls out action.

★★★★★

# ANIME

## SOUTH PARK – THE COMPLETE FOURTH SEASON (MA15+)

■ **STARRING:** Trey Parker, Matt Stone, Mary Kay Bergman, Isaac Hayes  
■ **CREATORS:** Trey Parker & Matt Stone



Perhaps one of the most unique things about *South Park* is that, even if you've managed to go for nearly a decade without catching a single show the episode titles alone ought to be enough to have you already laughing. Season four certainly boasts more than its fair share of true classics – the show had really begun to hit its stride now. This three-disc set contains all 17 episodes of the fourth season, with optional five to seven minute mini-commentaries.

**VERDICT:** Consistently funny and unapologetically offensive, *South Park* is a must for any comedy fan. *The Complete Third Season* is also available now, so grab both.

★★★★★

# DRAMA

## LIONS FOR LAMBS (??)

■ **STARRING:** Robert Redford, Meryl Streep, Tom Cruise, Michael Pena  
■ **DIRECTOR:** Robert Redford

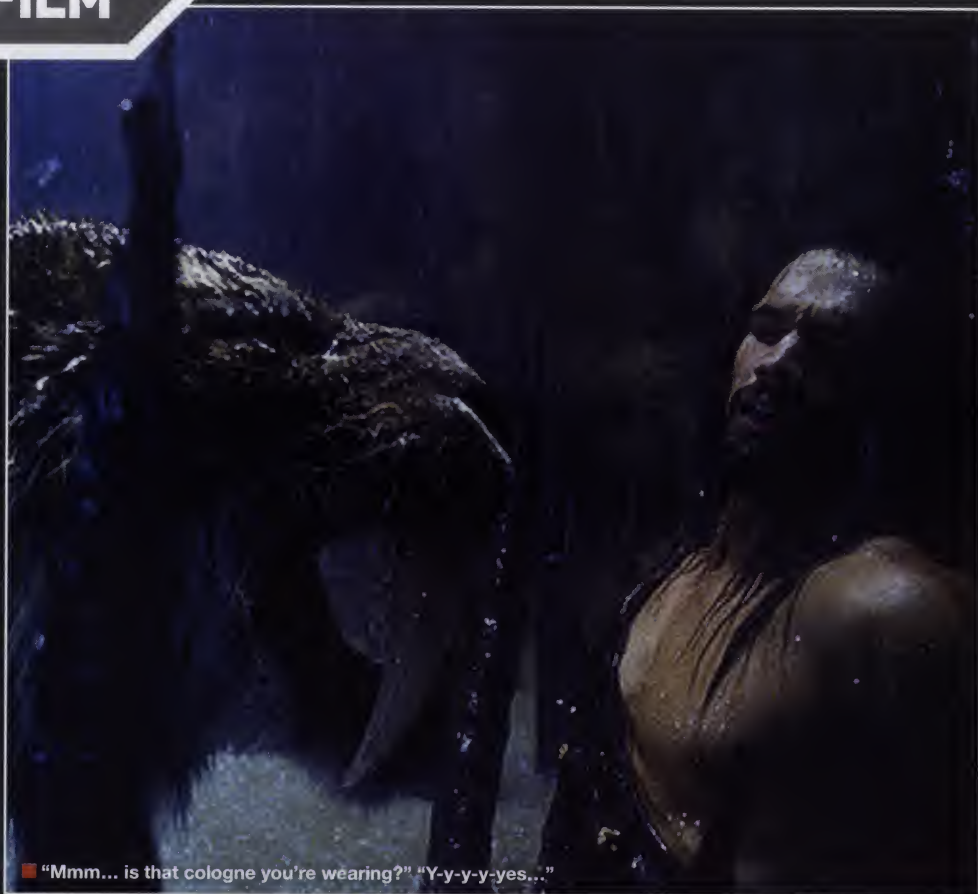


Directed by Hollywood legend Robert Redford, *Lions for Lambs* weaves three very different stories together, each centred around the current war in Iraq. Cruise is Jasper Irving, an ambitious Republican senator trying to pitch the government's new military to a journalist – hoping, in turn, she'll sell it to the public. Redford is Professor Malley, at odds with a tough student disinterested in class work. He tells him about two of his former students currently serving in Iraq (these two men form the third story). The movie then wanders around for a while.

**VERDICT:** It casts a critical eye at the current state of US politics, which is fine – that's democracy, but it's a bit too preachy to be that entertaining. Too... wordy.

★★★





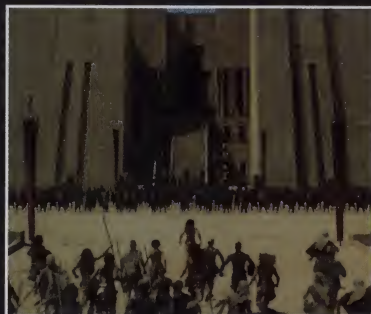
■ "Mmm... is that cologne you're wearing?" "Y-y-y-yes..."

CINEMA

# 10,000 B.C. (M)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Roland Emmerich  
■ **STARRING:** Steven Strait, Camilla Belle, Cliff Curtis, Omar Sharif

From director Roland Emmerich (director of *Stargate*, *Independence Day* and *The Day After Tomorrow*), *10,000 B.C.* is the tale of mammoth hunter D'Leh (Steven Strait). A heroic member of a hunter-gatherer tribe living in 10,000 B.C., D'Leh travels through dangerous unknown lands on an epic quest to rescue his people from extinction – encountering sabre-toothed tigers, mammoths and other prehistoric creatures along the way. Leading an army, D'Leh uncovers a lost civilisation while in pursuit of a magical warlord who kidnapped his love, Evolet (Camilla Belle). We're pretty sure historical accuracy wasn't exactly one of the main concerns of the scribes who penned this sucker, but it does sound like a socking great big adventure.



Opens March 6



■ Mammoths: we love these guys

## COMING SOON

### RUN FAT BOY RUN (M)

■ **STARRING:** Simon Pegg  
After leaving a woman on the altar five years ago, Dennis (Pegg) enters a marathon to prove he's no quitter when he finds out she's with another man. Opens March 6

### MR. WOODCOCK (Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Seann William Scott  
A self-help author who returns to his hometown discovers his mother has fallen in love with his old high school gym teacher and nemesis, Mr. Woodcock. Opens March 13

### DRILLBIT TAYLOR (Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Owen Wilson  
When three high school freshmen who are singled out by a bully on the first day of class they hire Drillbit Taylor (Owen Wilson) to protect them. Opens March 20

### SEMI PRO (Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Will Ferrell  
A typically wacky Will Ferrell comedy set in 1976 against the backdrop of the maverick ABA – a fast-paced basketball league that rivalled the NBA. Opens April 3

# BUZZ

The latest movie murmurs from home and abroad



### TRIBUTE

News on the rumour mill is that director Terry Gilliam (*12 Monkeys*, *Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas*) has asked Johnny Depp, Jude

Law and Colin Farrell to step in and complete the role unfinished by Heath Ledger at the time of his sudden death. Ledger had got one third of the way through filming *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*. There is no word as to when the film will resume production, although it's scheduled for a 2009 release.



### SNICK!

The first look at the upcoming *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* has appeared in the form of one shot, looking pretty much the same as every

other pic of Wolverine. The film will trace Wolverine's past as he discovers the world of mutants and, ultimately, the ominous Weapon X program, which turns people into living weapons. Expect Wolverine's nemesis Sabretooth to play a big role, plus an appearance from Gambit.



### DON'T CALL HIM JUNIOR

The *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* trailer has finally been revealed to the world, and we're

man enough to admit it was all we could do but shed a little tear as possibly the greatest hero of our childhood busts back onto our screen for the first time in nearly two decades. The trailer doesn't reveal much, except that Harrison Ford looks *freakin' old* these days, but we were glad to notice that the movie looks set to play up on this fact instead of blatantly ignoring it. Damn if we're not a bit giddy in anticipation. Indy, you're our best friend! The film's due out in May.



### BLU-RAY WINS

Toshiba Corporation has announced that, after a thorough review of its overall strategy for HD DVD, it has

decided it will no longer develop, manufacture and market HD DVD players and recorders. This leaves Blu-ray as the clear victor in the high definition format 'war', which could turn out to be a bit of a boon for Sony and the PS3. We'll bring you further details next issue.



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The latest and greatest gadgets

# TECH

The lights flash between blue, orange and green, in tune with the music

Memory to the tune of 1GB will let you watch it dance to about 250 tunes. Better get your secretary to cancel your one o'clock

## Rockin' and rollin'

World's first dancing, MP3-playing speaker-beast

Somehow, a dancing speaker just makes sense, like a popcorn-making telly. A barrel-shaped slab of musical mentality, the Sony Rolly Bluetooth MP3 player and speaker dances along to tunes you play through it: just lay it flat, double click the middle button and watch it roll about like an amphetamine-addled limbless man, flapping the little caps on either end of its body. You can either push it forward gently to change tracks, sharply to switch albums, or use the top roller to change tracks and the bottom one for volume. It sounds great for its size, goes like the clappers, and is very, very Japanese indeed.

**\$500** [www.sony.co.jp](http://www.sony.co.jp) Out now (Japan only)





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# HEAVENLY SWORD

Get ready to unleash hell with the sword from heaven with our combat tips and level guide!

Ninja Theory's free-roaming hack-and-slasher has a lot going for it, and we're not just talking about its two female leads – the heavenly Nariko and her delightfully mad sister, Kai. Nope, the game is gorgeous and if you like cutting, punching, kicking, breaking bones and cracking heads, all in glorious hi-res, then this is a game for you.



■ Her underpants are equally heavenly...

**I**n *Heavenly Sword* you'll spend most of your time playing as Nariko and some side-missions as her nutty friend (and adopted sister) Kai, who specialises in the use of her crossbow. It's a good mix and whilst the overall controls are pretty simple, and you can make a half-decent showing with some determined button-mashing, it's worth spending a little time making sure you know exactly which button does what to whom.

## CONTROLS

You have four main modes of controlling your character: the sticks, which control your movement; the face buttons, which give you attacks and basic actions; the shoulder buttons (L1 and R1), which determine your combat stance; and the SIXAXIS motion controls, which control projectiles in selected scenes.

### 1 Movement

This is pretty simple. The left stick moves your character around the screen. The right stick gives you a combat roll which is crucial for dodging Range attacks and for getting out of trouble quickly when you're getting surrounded.

Note that you can use the digital pad instead of the left analogue stick if you prefer.

### 2 Attacks and actions

Firstly, we should note that only Nariko can engage enemies in hand-to-hand combat; Nariko must rely on her Range attacks and some special defensive moves to get by.

△ and ⊕ are the basic attack buttons. △ is your block/counter button (also used to shoot); ⊕ also (depending on the combo) gives you a kick. When playing as Kai, ⊕ will stun an enemy so

you can get past him.

⊙ is used to trigger superstyle attacks and also to drop objects.

⊗ is your basic action button, used to pick up objects, fire weapons and throw projectiles.

### 3 Combat Stance

Playing as Kai, you have three combat stances: speed, power and ranged. Speed is the default stance and it provides a good mix of fast attacks and blocks. Speed attacks have blue energy trails.

Power stance is activated by holding down L1. These attacks do more damage but also leave Nariko more open to counter-attacks. They have an orange energy trail.

Range stance is activated by holding down R1. Nariko flings her swords out on chains, spinning them to deadly effect. This is a good way to thin out advancing

enemies. If you press △ in Range Stance you'll sweep debris up and into your enemies' faces. It doesn't do any damage but it allows you to close with them unmolested.

### 4 SIXAXIS Controls

There are two main uses for the SIXAXIS controls. Firstly, if Nariko is launched into the air by an attack, quickly flick the SIXAXIS up and she'll flip in midair and recover.

Secondly, there are a number of sequences in the game where you use the controls to guide a projectile to its target after it has been launched. These include cannonballs, Kai's arrows, and various thrown items. Simply tilt the controller forward or back, left or right as required. A gentle touch is desirable, so try to guide your projectiles smoothly, in an arc – a big, hasty correction at the end of the flightpath is much harder to



control than a steady motion.

## 5 Combos and Superstyle attacks

As you progress through the game you'll progressively unlock more and more combo attacks. You can view these at any time by pausing the game and going into the 'Combos' menu. These are listed in the table.

Aerial combos are initiated by hitting an enemy with a triangle button attack whilst in Range Stance, then flicking the SIXAXIS controller up so as to follow your victim into the air. Once airborne you simply execute whichever combo you choose (see the table).

Superstyle attacks are triggered with the **○** button. There are three levels of attack, as indicated by the gauge in the top-right corner of the screen. This gauge is filled as you earn style points, for performing combos and counters. Simply press the button when near an enemy and you'll execute the attack (and your victim). You can wait until the gauge fills up completely for the level three attack, or use the level one or two attacks as they become available.

## 6 Defence

Nariko blocks attacks automatically, as long as she's not attacking and is in the correct stance. Attacks that glow blue must be blocked from Speed Stance (**■**); attacks that glow orange must be blocked from Power stance (**■**); attacks that glow red are unblockable and must be dodged (right stick); attacks that glow yellow (Range attacks) must be blocked by being in Range Stance (**■**) and pressing **A** or **X** deflect the projectile.

Some enemies will block your attacks; you can get through these with a block-breaking attack of your own. A Power attack breaks a regular block; more powerful enemies will require a block-breaker combo and the most powerful will require a block-breaker combo in Power Stance.

You can counter attacks by hitting **A** as your enemy attacks. If you mis-time this, you'll take the hit. If you time it correctly, you'll instantly kill your foe. You must of course be in the same stance as your enemy. Red and yellow attacks can't be countered.

You'll also find 'Heavenly Pots' scattered around the levels. These red or black pots, with glowing yellow lettering, will completely refill your health gauge, and give a boost to your Heavenly Gauge (see below) when broken. Try to avoid hitting them until your health is well down, so as to get the maximum benefit from them. You can also hit them at the end of a fight (before you move on) to help max out your Heavenly Gauge.

## 7 The Heavenly Gauge

As you kill enemies in sequence – without taking damage yourself – you'll notice your combo number racking up as you hit enemies, and the

## COMBO LIST

### LONGSWORD

Crescent Kick	<b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b>
Reverse Slash	<b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b>
Somersault Kick	<b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b>
Spiral Blade	<b>A</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b>
Ten Footed Kick	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b>

### SPEED STANCE

Angel's Crop	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b>
Angel's Fury	<b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b>
Angel's Grave	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>○</b> (after landing)
Angel's Harvest	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b>
Angel's Smite	<b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>○</b>
Angel's Vortex	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>○</b>
Angelic Fury	<b>A</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b>
Fallen Angel	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b> (when falling)
Heaven's Ascent	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b> (after landing)
Heaven's Spiral	<b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>○</b>
Heaven's Wrath	<b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b>
Heaven's Storm	<b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b>
Pummeling Angel	<b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b>
Savage Angel	<b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>○</b>
Twin Angels	<b>A</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b>
Twisted Angel	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b>

### POWER STANCE (**■**)

Blade of the Devil	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b>
Devil's Favour	<b>A</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b>
Devil Kneels	<b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b>
Devil's Scythe	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b>
Hell's Envy	<b>A</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b>
Hell's Wrath	<b>A</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b>
Laughing Devil	<b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b>
Raising Hell	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b>
Rising Devil	<b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b>
Striking Hell	<b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b>

### RANGE STANCE (**■**)

Divine Storm	<b>A</b> x 9
Unfurling Wrath	<b>○</b> x 9

### AERIAL COMBOS

(**A** + **■**, then flick SIXAXIS up to initiate)

Bladed Downfall	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b> ( <b>○</b> + <b>■</b> ) x 2
Deliverance	<b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b>
Falling Blossom	<b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>○</b>
Flying Angel	<b>○</b> , ( <b>A</b> + <b>■</b> ) x 4
Flying Fan	<b>○</b> , ( <b>A</b> + <b>■</b> ) x 2
Flying Redemption	<b>○</b> , <b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b>
Flying Vortex	<b>○</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b> , <b>A</b>
Liberation	<b>○</b> , ( <b>A</b> + <b>■</b> ), ( <b>○</b> + <b>■</b> )
Optimistic Flight	<b>○</b> , ( <b>○</b> + <b>■</b> )
Soaring Blade	<b>○</b> , ( <b>○</b> + <b>■</b> ) x 3
Soaring Embrace	<b>○</b> , ( <b>○</b> + <b>■</b> ) x 3

### SUPERSTYLES (available as gauge fills)

Lover's Embrace (level 1)	<b>○</b>
Startled Lover (level 2)	<b>○</b>
Stolen Kiss (level 3)	<b>○</b>
Gentle Seduction (level 1)	<b>○</b> + <b>■</b>
Lingering Touch (level 2)	<b>○</b> + <b>■</b>
Whirling Passion (level 3)	<b>○</b> + <b>■</b>
Lover's Quarrel (level 1)	<b>○</b> + <b>■</b>
Compassion (level 2)	<b>○</b> + <b>■</b>
Adoring Traveller (level 3)	<b>○</b> + <b>■</b>





gauge across the bottom of the screen will fill up. Along its length are three Glyphs; these unlock various extras, like artwork and movies, but perhaps more importantly they also serve to unlock new combos. Each level description below has 'Glyph Tips' with hints on how to max out your Gauge and get all three precious Glyphs.

## CHAPTER ONE

This chapter starts with prelude scene (called, intriguingly, 'The Final Battle') that will get you used to moving and attacking. You can't actually die here, so just hack and slay (and press when prompted for some cool Superstyle kills) until the cut-scene plays and the game proper begins.

### 1 The Art of Battle

This is pretty straightforward. Go up the ladder, across the deck, down the other side, then down the third ladder. Join your clanmates in the courtyard and get busy killing. You don't have the Heavenly Sword yet, just your longsword, so try to get as many counters as you can and keep rolling. There are three Heavenly Pots; on the platform over the gate, one on the far side of the courtyard across from the gate and another behind come barrels to the right of the gates.

There are two waves of attack, so you might want to save a Pot or two for the second group of enemies.

#### Glyph Tips

You don't have many combos yet, so concentrate on avoiding damage, making as many counters as you can and breaking the pots when you've racked up a decent combo number.

### 2 Night Attack

Your first mission as Kai. You have to kill as many soldiers as you can. Just be patient and try to be as smooth as you can with the SIXAXIS. Make sure you kill the enemy archers (they'll flash with a yellow glow as they're getting ready to fire) before they start shooting at you. There's a Heavenly Pot under the shanty just to your left if you need it, and another in the treehouse (also to your left).

#### Glyph Tips

To get all three Glyphs on this stage you have to concentrate on killing all 25 soldiers without missing. Your gauge increases as you make consecutive shots, so take your time and don't forget



■ You ever notice that women who play the bass guitar are just... hotter? Well, it's the same for bazookas. Times about a thousand

to shoot the Heavenly Pot if you're getting close to the end, even if you don't need the health top-up.

### 3 Dawn Siege

Head up the ladders until you get to the top of the walls; watch the cut-scene and man that cannon! Similar to last stage, you have to use aftertouch to guide projectiles – except that this time you're shooting cannonballs at the three catapults coming across the snow. You have to hit the three shields on the catapults to knock their armour off, then hit one last shield deep in their frames. You only have four minutes, so again, take your time and if you can see a shot is too far off target, release the controls and fire again.

Once the catapults are dealt with, you need to kill 700 enemies. Your cannonballs are quite explosive, as are the burning barrels rolling towards your fort, so aim for the larger troop

concentrations and the moving barrels and you should rack up the kills without too much trouble.

#### Glyph Tips

This can be tough. The trick is to wait for the soldiers to bunch up as they're getting close to the walls, so you can take out lots of them with each shot. You can't afford to miss with more than one or two shots, so if you're determined to get all three Glyphs this may take a couple of attempts.

### 4 The Escape

Very straightforward. Just follow your nose and kill the enemies who approach! There's a Heavenly Pot on your right just past the bridge you go under when fighting the first wave of soldiers. There's another just before the bridge where you face the second wave, on the right just behind an old pillar. You'll also encounter enemies with shields. Either wait for an opening in their

attack sequence or counter their attacks to get through their defences. Finally, you'll get the chance to throw things at your enemies. If you've got the time and space to do so, give it a go. When you're done, head through the gate and into the next level.

#### Glyph Tips

The fights here aren't too hard but you'll definitely want to use the Heavenly Pots to help boost your Gauge. Try running through the two big groups of enemies so you can smash the pot then return to the fights.

### 5 Forest Ambush

This level begins with what you could call a mini-boss. The dude with the large hat is actually not so tough, though he blocks a lot. Just use the Ten Footed Kick to break his block, then lay into him. There's pot in this courtyard (and two in the next), so once you've cleared both areas, turn the wheel





to open the gate so you can move on.

Now you've got to use aftertouch to throw a sword at (and kill) an enemy, then you have to use another thrown sword to ring a gong. Easy. Go through the gate and this level is done.

#### **Glyph Tips**

There's only really one fight to worry about here, so get stuck in and make the best of it. Retreat towards each of the Heavenly Pots in turn and break them open to boost your Gauge and you should have no trouble getting all three Glyphs. Sweet.

## **6 The Heavenly Sword**

Now we're talking! At last Nariko pulls out the serious cutlery and lets loose. This is effectively a training level, so follow the prompts. Use Power Stance on enemies with shields and Range Stance when a large group is closing in. There's a Heavenly Pot to the right if you need it.

#### **Glyph Tips**

The key here is to keep killing. Take care to avoid being hit and don't go to the pot unless you're in strife or you've racked up a good chain of combos.

## CHAPTER TWO

Nariko awakes, to discover that Shen and her clanmates have been captured, so it's off to the rescue.

## **1 Fearless**

A nice short fight to get loosened up. Stand by the glowing spot and hit ⊗, then follow the prompts to run and jump along the ropes. When you get to the top of the pillar, it's time to start the massacre.

#### **Glyph Tips**

It's not too hard to get three Glyphs here. Just rely on Speed Stance to build up your combos – Power Stance attacks are far too likely to knock your enemies off

the pillar and, as there are not that many of them, you'll want to lay as many hits as possible on each one.

## **2 No Turning Back**

Find the glowing spot and follow the button prompts to make your way down to a small courtyard. The fight here isn't too hard but the initial opposition will soon be joined by reinforcements, including three red-clad axemen. Use Power Stance on these to break their guard and finish them off when you knock them down. There are three Heavenly Pots in the courtyard (on the near wall, the far wall and on the left near the door) so really, this is still more of a warm-up than a serious challenge. When you're done, hit the gong and walk through the gate.

#### **Glyph Tips**

There are plenty of enemies to fight, and three Pots, so getting all three Glyphs shouldn't give you too much trouble. Try to fill your Gauge as much as possible before the reinforcements arrive, as the axemen block a lot and can interrupt your combo build-up. Hold off on using the jars until you've got a good combo string going and you'll be fine.

## **3 Fire Fight**

This stage is simplicity itself. The archers will kill you very quickly if you let them shoot you, so enter Range Stance and hammer away at ⊕ (or △) and you'll not only deflect their arrows, you'll fill your Heavenly Gauge. You'll hear them shouting instructions as they're getting ready to fire and if you're at range, they'll glow yellow as they're about to shoot. Note that if you get into a fight, they're pretty handy – and their comrades will keep shooting! You can, in fact, get through both groups using nothing but Range Stance if you choose. There's a pot behind the second group.

Once they're dealt with, follow the path to a courtyard with some steps. Go up the ladder and grab a helmet. Throw it at the statue of Bohan; use aftertouch to hit the statue's shield and rebound the helmet into the gong facing it. The door will open and you can go through to the next mission.

#### **Glyph Tips**

One of the game's easiest Gauge fills.

Just keep on deflecting the archers' arrows and your gauge will fill. You shouldn't need the pot but if you do, it's there for the taking.

## **4 Beware the Fox**

Pause for respect, please – it's the game's first boss fight. First you'll have to take down Flying Fox's henchmen, which shouldn't cause too many problems. There are two Heavenly Pots (one on each side of the combat area) if you need them. Once you've dealt with all the mooks, you'll fight the scrawny git himself. Concentrate on Power Stance attacks – Range and Speed Stance are largely ineffective against him. When you've depleted his health, you'll enter a button-prompt sequence. It may take a couple of tries to get this, and if you miss a prompt Flying Fox will recover some health so you can wear him down and repeat. Once he's dealt with, the mission ends.

#### **Glyph Tips**

It should be pretty easy to get all three Glyphs for this mission. Concentrate on building up big combo chains early on, using Speed and Range Stance and the Heavenly Pots, should you need them. You'll also get a boost to your meter when you defeat Flying Fox (good for about half a segment).

## **5 Prison Approach**

Run through the passageway, down the temple stairs and head right. There's a Heavenly Pot on the left, in the small grassed area before another set of steps leading up. As you go up the stairs soldiers will throw bodies and barrels at you. Dodge these then, when you get to the top of the stairs, get stuck in. There are soldiers with axes as well as swords, so use Power Stance (mixed in with Speed and Range Stance on the weaker enemies) and you'll have everyone dead in no time. When you're done, keep on following the path, up the stairs and into the prison for the next mission to start.

#### **Glyph Tips**

Hit the pot before heading up the stairs – it'll give your Heavenly Gauge a nice start. You shouldn't have too much difficulty filling your Gauge here, just concentrate on using Power Stance on







■ "All right. The stairs aren't gonna walk themselves..."

the axemen and rack up as many hits as possible on the others.

**6 The Prison**  
The opening of this mission is a pretty straightforward smash and bash job. Blue-clad enemies will attack (in only one wave) and you can rely on your Power Stance to deal with them, for the most part. Watch out for incoming Speed Stance attacks and stay mobile and you'll be fine. There are two Heavenly Pots in the room – one near the entrance and one near the ladder.

When they're all good and dead, climb up the ladder and pull the lever to open the upper level cell doors. Hit the gong to open the first gate, then go into the first cell and grab a helmet. Come back out to the landing and aftertouch-throw it at the gong directly across from where you're standing. Follow the balcony around to the next box of shields; grab one of these and throw it at the next gong, across from where you came up on the ladder. This opens a final gate and you can now run around to the lever that will open the doors to your clansmen's cells.

Run back to the ladder and go back down to the floor level, rejoining your clansmates. Mission complete.

#### **Glyph Tips**

It can be tricky to get all three Glyphs on this stage, but it's not impossible. Use Power Stance to break your opponent's block, then whittle them down with the Speed attacks. Stay near the entrance at first and when you've built up a good combo number, smash the pot and keep up the pace of the attack. Now move the fight over to the ladder so you can do the same with the pot there.

**7 The Main Gate**  
Run towards the cannon, pick it up by pressing the **X** button and start blasting away! Use aftertouch to aim your rockets – take your finger off the button (when they're near a group of enemies) to detonate. You have ten shots, so make them all count. Finish off any remaining soldiers and move up to the gate. There are two Heavenly Pots on the bridge – one right near the start (before the cannon) and one near the statue by the gates.

Move over to the flashing spot on the right. Follow the prompts to get to the top of the gate and kill the soldiers. Head over to the switch, which will pull back the bars locking the main gate, below. Grab a shield and throw it across the way, aiming for the gong on the other side. Go back down and then head for the glowing point on the left. Again, follow the prompts to make it up to the top, and finish off the guards. Throw the switch (which will open the gate) and go back down and through.

#### **Glyph Tips**

The cannon can be a bit of a trap here, because if you take too long between shots your combo counter will reset, making it more difficult to get the long strings necessary. If you want to make sure of getting all three Glyphs, forget about using the cannon altogether and wade into the troops, using Range and Speed Stance to build up your combos. Use the pot near the statue if you need it and if you're still a little short on the combo-count, don't worry – there are still enemies up top.

**8 Bait and Trap**  
You're up against a real grab-bag of enemies here, with all types mixed in together. Use Range Stance as they approach and make sure you dodge your way out of trouble if you're surrounded and the enemies are pressing in. There are three Heavenly Pots in the area: one on each side near your entry point and one in the far right corner.

#### **Glyph Tips**

Not too hard. There are plenty of enemies, and a pot if you need it, so stay alert and use Speed Stance as your mainstay.

**9 Whiptail**  
Why is it that snotty females in these games always sound like upper-crust Brits? Hmmmm. That's a question for another day; the question for today is how to hand this scaly freak her head. It's actually not too hard but, as is the case with most of this game's bosses, it takes patience. Whiptail has two Range attacks: a wave (use Speed Stance attacks to break these up) and water pulses (which must be dodged). When you get in close, Speed Stance is your best bet but she blocks a lot and has some unblockable strikes of her own, so be prepared to dodge and strike quickly. There are three Heavenly Pots: one on each side, about halfway along, and one at the far end.

At the end of each health gauge there will be some button-press sequences; execute these to finish the gauge off.

#### **Glyph Tips**

At first this seems nearly impossible, but the trick is to use Range Stance and square to deflect Whiptail's waves; this will fill your Heavenly Gauge nicely. While she's on her first health gauge, concentrate on dodging her attacks and breaking waves; once you've got your Heavenly Gauge taken care of you can get busy and finish Whiptail. Try to save



■ The Biggest Loser – getting medieval on their fat arses...



the Heavenly Pots for the fighting, as Whiptail can dish out some damage.

**10 Shen's Escape**  
Kai must shoot down the soldiers who are charging at Shen. It's a pretty straightforward mission but you'll need to fire accurately, especially if you want to get all three Glyphs. Just take your time and keep your hands steady.

Don't let any soldier get too close to Shen, or he'll be cut down and you'll fail the mission. There are three Heavenly Pots: one on the platform with the archers and another on the platform

## "FORGET ABOUT USING THE CANNON ALTOGETHER."





■ Hair physics have never been so arousing...

across from it, and one on the ground, in front and just to the left of your initial shooting position.

There are two archers to kill first off, on a platform on the left side of the bridge, then there will be several waves of soldiers on the ground, first coming from in front of Shen, then behind, then from both directions.

#### Glyph Tips

Don't miss. That's about it. You need to try and build up consecutive hits to consistently fill up your Gauge. You can shoot the Pots if you so desire, but you might want to save them until closer to the end of the level.

## 11 Eye of the Storm

Time to finish of Whiptail once and for all. This battle is pretty similar to your first encounter; in fact, it's actually easier, as Whiptail has only one health gauge this time (there are also three pots to find again – one on each side and one at one end).

She'll mix up her ranged attacks more, and fire them off faster, but her melee technique is the same (that is, still deadly). But she moves fast, so match her by dodging frequently and, when you've eliminated her health bar, follow the prompts to kill the swamp bitch once and for all.



#### Glyph Tips

As with the first fight, not too hard. Break up her waves (using **△** plus **⊙**), dodge her other attacks and lay on the combos. Make sure that you don't get hit by water pulses between waves, or your combo counter will reset.

## CHAPTER THREE

So now Bohan has both Nariko and the sword. Bad news. Fortunately, she has friends. Friends who know how to kill and who aren't happy about Nariko and the sword being in Bohan's hands. It's not hard to figure out what happens next...

## 1 Kai's Mission

Kai is on a bridge, and as she starts to move forward, soldiers come pouring out the other end. You have to shoot them all before they get to you. Aftertouch is the key, of course. If any soldiers get close you can fire at close range, but your best bet is to evade (using **⊙**) and vault over obstacles (using **⊗**). There's one Heavenly Pot on this level, on the far right corner of the building the soldiers come out of.

Once the first wave of soldiers has been dealt with, you've got to shoot an arrow through some flames to ignite so you can blow the gate open. Go through the room and onto the next bridge. A heavily-armoured soldier will come through the doors at the far end – you have to shoot him in the face to put him out of action.

#### Glyph Tips

You know the deal: don't miss. Don't waste time running back or forwards once the soldiers start coming, just stand your ground and shoot steadily.

## 2 Playtime

This is an awkward level, with Kai in close (and cluttered) quarters. It's hard to get enough range for aftertouch shots, so you'll need to take close range shots, then dodge (square) and vault (**⊗**) your way out of trouble. Try to keep the soldiers at range as much as possible; Kai can't defend and it only takes a few hits for her to die. Once you've faced three waves of soldiers you can exit down a short corridor and spin a wheel to open the gate.

There are three Heavenly Pots to help you out (one on the top of the shelves that jut out into the room, one on a ledge near the corridor the second wave of guards comes out of, and one in a broken barrel near the wheel).

#### Glyph Tips

Keep your chain going. You can try running down one of the level's 'corridors' so all your enemies have to come directly at you, and the pots are good for around a third of your Gauge, but try not to use them until there's a break in the action.

## 3 Shooting Fish

Don't open the gates! Let the soldiers do that (with you shooting at them the whole time). There are three waves of soldiers to defeat and, of course, you want to mow them down with aftertouch shots. You can fire at close range if you need to, but distance is your friend.

Once you've killed all the soldiers, go into the building. Stop in the doorway: there's a Heavenly Pot up on some scaffolding to your right. Use the wheel to open the gate and step out: a second Pot is on a winch, to your left (don't run towards it or you'll trigger the next mission). Don't shoot it if you don't need it, as you may want to save it for the next mission. When you're ready to move on, follow the scaffolding around to your left.

#### Glyph Tips

Shoot without missing, and use the two pots to max out your Gauge if necessary.

## 4 Duck and Cover

Go up the ladder and take cover. This mission is a bit of a shooting gallery, so take your time. You can also shoot your arrows through the flames and guide them into the red barrels, which will explode and take out all the soldiers nearby. Once you've shot everyone go up the next ladder and along the ledge. Head through the large doors and you're done.

There's a Heavenly Pot at the bottom of the stairs and also the one from the end of the last mission, if you saved it. There's also one in the rotating wheel. You can't get it from up top; instead, go back down the ladder, past where you began the level, and to the end of the walkway. Aim at the wheel's lowest point and wait for it to carry the Pot past your sights. Easy!

#### Glyph Tips

Shoot without missing. The explosive barrels are great fun but if you set one off and no-one is killed, your combo will be broken.

## 5 Twing Twang!

Jump into the elevator and head on up. Proceed on until you come to another bridge. You have to kill all the enemy archers; make good use of



■ Generic goons: we hate these guys



the braziers to ignite your arrows and shoot the explosive barrels. Take cover when the archers are about to shoot (you'll hear the order being given, and the soldiers will glow yellow when they're about to fire).

There are two Heavenly Pots inside the tower to the left, and one on the battlements on top of the building. You'll break them if you can detonate the barrels nearby, or you can shoot them separately. The ones in the tower are tricky, because they're inside; try aiming high and to the right, so you can turn your arrow to the left and get a straight shot down into the room.

Once everyone is

dead, head up the path, open the gate and walk on through.

## **Glyph Tips**

Get the pots, and don't miss with your shots! Simple!

## **6 Brother Against Brother**

Back to Nariko, who has to use a special nerve strike to disable her clanmates without killing them. You need to counter their attacks by hitting **A**, then following the prompt (for either **△** or **○**). If you mis-time your button press, Nariko will kill her clanmate instead of paralyzing him.

Note that you have a longsword, not the Heavenly Sword, and that there are no Heavenly Pots, so you'll need to dodge and make sure you don't get surrounded.

## **Glyph Tips**

Your Heavenly Gauge is filled by successfully paralyzing your clanmates – so get busy and try not to kill them! Kills will break your combo and do not add to your Gauge at all.

## **7 Fireworks**

Use the glowing points to cross over the beams and get from one side of this level to the other. You need to go to the door on the other side, but the guard wants a password, which you'll have to get from the commander in the West tower.

But before you do that, you have to kill all the axemen. They're only vulnerable to headshots – and exploding barrels. So fire through the braziers to light your arrows guide them into the red barrels (which will then explode) and pick

off any stragglers with headshots. Use the beams to cross from side to side and avoid getting up close to the soldiers as they'll kill poor Kai quick-smart if they catch her.

Head out the open gate (it's to the right of the 'password' door) and down to the west tower. The commander won't reveal the password so you have to go back into the building, across the beams and fire an arrow through some flames, across the room, out the door, down the path and through the door into the pile of explosives in the west tower. Now the commander will give you the password; with it, you can go back to the first door and be allowed to enter.

There are two Heavenly Pots in this mission; one near the 'password' door and another inside the west tower.

## **Glyph Tips**

You shouldn't have too much trouble in this level, as the enemies are worth plenty to your Gauge and you should be able to effectively 'combo' them with the exploding barrels. Use the pots any time you need them – they'll each fill a fair chunk of your Gauge.

## **8 A New Threat**

Nariko now has to fight one of Roach's 'pets'. Without the Heavenly Sword this is a bit of a challenge, but all you really need to do is keep moving. Come in for a combo and dodge out; repeat until the pet is dead.

## **Glyph Tips**

Getting all three Glyphs here is actually pretty easy. Your Gauge will fill incredibly rapidly as soon as you land any combos on the pet – you should get two without any trouble at all, three if you're actually

paying attention. Keep it together.

## **9 Riding High**

There's a Heavenly Pot in the corner to your immediate left, so shoot and then jump into the cable car. You'll have to take out several groups of archers. The first will come through the door you used, so line them up and shoot them down. The next group will take up position on the bridge. You can use the braziers hanging from the cable lines, or the ones on the bridge, to aim at the explosive barrels, or just content yourself with a sting of headshots. There's a pot on the bridge too, about one-third of the way along. Keep your ears open so you can hear the order being given to fire on you; just take cover when the shots are incoming. Once the bridge is clear, a group of archers will come out onto the landing near above and to the left of you, then another on the steps to the right of that. Now your cable car will fall apart – and you'll have to hang upside-down and take out the last group of soldiers. Don't let it put you off, just guide your shots home. There's a pot on the right side of this ledge – except if you're shooting at it now, it'll be on the left.

Then you can run into the armoury and grab the sword, just in time for a visit from Flying Fox. Follow the on-screen prompts to avoid his attacks and split!

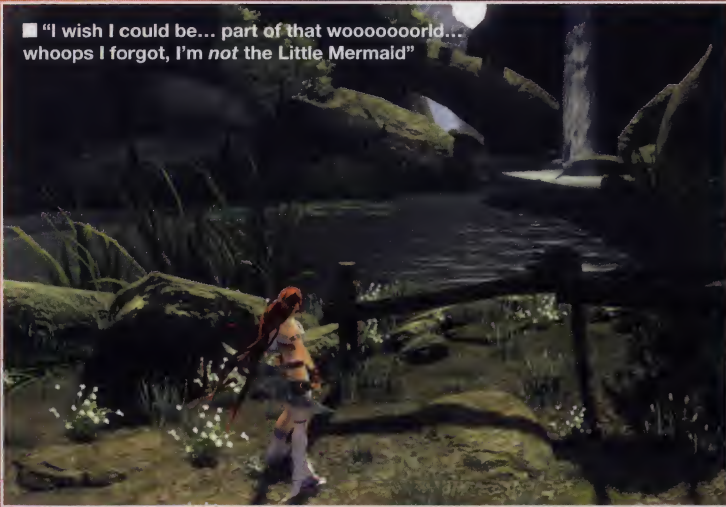
## **Glyph Tips**

The usual rules all apply here – get combos of accurate shots, supplement these with Heavenly Pots, and avoid being hit. This is actually quite a tough one, but with careful shooting and a little bit of luck you should eventually be able to get all three Glyphs.





■ "I wish I could be... part of that woaaaaaorld... whoops I forgot, I'm *not* the Little Mermaid"



**10 Roach's Pets**  
Not as hard as it at first seems. Nariko now faces five of Roach's pets but as soon as Kai delivers the Heavenly Sword, the tide of battle turns. The key is to use Speed attacks followed by Power attacks to knock the pets over, then finish them off with the sword. A single pot is thrown down onto the floor at the start of the fight, so use it judiciously.

**Glyph Tips**  
Defensive play is the key here, as your Gauge fills up pretty handily even with short combos. So you want to keep them going as long as possible, and that means not getting hit! Use the pots when you need them and you shouldn't have too much trouble at all in filling your Heavenly Gauge and getting all three Glyphs. Choice.

**11 Rolling Thunder**  
Aaaaah yes, fighting these freaks is *always* fun. Now it's time to deal with Roach, Bohan's rather odd, and somewhat pathetic, son. The key here is to use Roach's simple-mindedness against him. He has attacks that deal serious damage, so keep your distance. When he rolls into a ball and charges, dodge out of the way. As he's recovering, move in for a couple of hits, then back off again. Heavenly Pots are thrown into the ring from time to time, so pay keep an eye out and use them whenever necessary.

As you finish off each of his health gauges you'll have to get behind him as he recovers from an attack move to put some hits on him. Just follow the prompts. When his final health gauge is done, you'll have to respond to a sequence of prompts very quickly, or you'll have to start it all (the sequence of prompts, not the whole fight) again.

**Glyph Tips**  
There are two keys here. The first is to get Roach to slam into the large braziers – this will not only stun him, it'll do damage and help fill your Gauge. The second is to use the pots whenever you can to supplement your combos, which will, of necessity, be short.

## CHAPTER FOUR

Now the hunt is on, with Bohan sending Flying Fox out to kill Kai. Nariko doesn't think much of that plan, not at all.

**1 Cat and Mouse**  
There's no real need to hurry in this stage, and the axe-wielding foes Nariko faces are hard to kill quickly in any case. They block all the time and have plenty of unblockable attacks, so stay mobile and watch out for that red glow. If you manage to knock one down, make sure you finish him off. Two batches of three each will attack. There's a Heavenly Pot near the gateway should you need it, and once you go through the gate you'll be attacked by a squad of ninjas. Use your Range Stance to take them out quickly (and Speed Stance if they get in close); once they're dealt with there's another batch of axemen, and another pot on the right hand side near the gate.

**Glyph Tips**  
This is a tough one. It's hard to lay a long combo on the axemen, so concentrate on getting long strings of hits (ideally, using Range Stance) on the ninjas. If you can get an aerial combo on them, you can even keep registering hits after they've snuffed it. The pots are a big help, if you can get to them.

**2 On Silent Wings**  
Ninjas. Again. Then Axemen. Nice. As previously, use Range and Speed Stance on the ninjas, and Power Stance plus mobility on the axemen. There's a pot to the right of the gate and another in the far left corner of the courtyard beyond the gate if you need it. To progress, you have to spin the wheel (by pressing ⊗), which raises a winch. Quickly run to the box of shields. Throw one at the winch's load (a statue of Bohan) and use aftertouch to bounce it off the statue and on to the gong behind the gate. You have to be quick about it, as the winch will drop soon after you leave the wheel.



**Glyph Tips**  
As with the last mission, hitting the ninjas with lots of Range Stance attacks is the key to getting all three Glyphs here, with the Axemen and Heavenly Pots playing a supporting role.

**3 Hunting Party**  
This is a tough fight. The sword-wielding foes are similar to the ninjas but they block more and their attacks do more damage. Use block-breakers and make sure you finish off any you manage to knock down. Mixed in with these chaps are some more axe-wielders. There are three Pots on ground level – one on the right at the front, and one in each of the back corners.

Once everyone is dead, you can start climbing. Make sure you clear out all the soldiers on the various levels first; once you reach the top, just run along and end the mission.

**Glyph Tips**  
Juggle the sword-wielding soldiers whenever possible and stay mobile to split up your enemies and avoid their attacks. Make judicious use of the pots and you should make three glyphs without too much trouble.

**4 Beasts of the Land**  
More of Roach's 'pets'. They'll come at you in numbers, so stay mobile and try to isolate them for some one-on-one action. Use a guard breakers where possible and finish off any knocked-over foes without hesitation. There are two Heavenly Pots: one about halfway along the right-hand wall and another in the back left corner.

**Glyph Tips**  
Man, Chapter Four is one tough cookie. These enemies block a lot, making long combo chains difficult to achieve. There's a pot toward the top left part of the level, but you may well prefer to use it to save your life, and not your Heavenly Gauge. Isolate, attack, dodge.

**5 The Wrong Place**  
This level is pretty much a slaughterama. There are lots of the game's weakest enemies for you to murder and no axe-wielders or any of Roach's creations. Whew! There's a Heavenly Pot just as you go through the gate and onto the bridge, which is crawling with enemies. There's room for everything here, so you can start off with (for example) some Range Stance hits, then switch to Speed or even Power Stance when you get close.

Once the bridge is clear, head into the courtyard. When the archers fire, make sure you're in Range Stance (Ⓐ) and hit ⊕ repeatedly to deflect the arrows. Charge into the fray; you'll find that whilst the archers aren't completely clueless in hand-to-hand combat, they're not match for Nariko. Listen carefully to what's going on; if there are any archers off-screen getting ready to shoot, you'll hear them calling out instructions to each other so you can get ready to deflect their shots.

When everyone is dead, you'll need to spin the wheel, then quickly grab something (sword, shield, even a corpse) and throw it at the gong that becomes visible. Once you've hit it, the gate will stay open and through you go.

**"NINJAS. AGAIN. THEN AXEMEN. NICE."**





## Glyph Tips

At last, an easy one. There are plenty of weak enemies to slaughter here, so getting all three Glyphs should be a doddle. Use the Pot if you need it – but it's quite likely that you won't.

## 6 Temple Wilds

The first half of this level is a button-response sequence as Nariko makes her way across an exploding bridge. Then it's a battle against some more ninjas, with whom Nariko is by now well familiar. There's a Heavenly Pot at the end of the main combat area if you need it.

## Glyph Tips

As always, you can rely on the ninjas to help boost your Gauge, but you can also get good value from the screen prompt section; the quicker your responses, the further your Gauge will fill. Still, it's pretty easy to get all three Glyphs on this mission.

## 7 To Kill A Fox

At last, the time has come to put an end to one of the most irritating game enemies ever. At last! As usual, you have to wipe out three health gauges before Flying Fox dies but if you're patient it's not actually that hard.

For starters, when he's in the air, Flying Fox has two types of projectiles: blue and orange. Block the blue ones by hitting **△**, and the orange ones by hitting **⬇** whilst in power stance, at the point of impact. If you time it right, you can even use aftertouch to guide the blue

projectiles back at Flying Fox. When he's on the ground, stay agile and hit him with Power Stance attacks.

On his second health gauge, he'll summon duplicates of himself but they're pretty weak (though they deal out as much damage as the real Flying Fox).

When he's on his last health gauge he'll summon many more duplicates and leave you to take care of them. Keep on running and dodging and don't let yourself get surrounded. When you've killed the last one, Kai revives and all you have to do is shoot Flying Fox once to finish him off.

## Glyph Tips

The key here is to wait. There are three Heavenly Pots but as Nariko, you can only reach one. Try to save it for the fights against the duplicates. When you switch to playing Kai, quickly shoot one or both of the other two pots (they're good for about a quarter-Gauge each).

## CHAPTER FIVE

Shen and Bohan have prepared their armies – now all that remains is to fight.

## 1 Bohan's Army

Remember this? Once more you're firing a cannon at Bohan's army. There's no time limit but the fort's walls can only take a certain amount of damage, so you need to destroy the catapults and flaming barrels before they breach the walls. The same rules as in previous 'aftertouch levels' apply: guide your shot gently towards its target

and try not to waste shots. Again, the catapults' weak spots are marked by shields. Once the first two are off, you'll need to hit the red armoured sections to expose the remainder. Keep an eye on the burning, rolling barrels; make sure you take these out before they get to the walls and explode. You don't need to worry about enemy soldiers per se, but killing groups of them can be a handy way of keeping your combo rolling. The mission ends when you've destroyed the four catapults (or when they've destroyed the walls).

## Glyph Tips

Taking down the catapults is the key to keeping your Gauge humming here. Even if it looks like your shot isn't going to hit a shield it can still kill soldiers when it hits the catapult, so just make sure every shot does some damage (a miss will cause your combo to reset). You also have only a relatively short time between shots before the Gauge stops, so make sure all of your shots hit something, even if it's only a few measly soldiers on the ground.

## 2 Death from Above

Female ninjas. On hang gliders. And your dad. With lots of knives. What's a girl to do? Well, killing springs to mind... This mission can be quite a pain, as the ninjas are good at dodging and blocking (which helps to make up for their relatively weak attacks) and there are plenty of them. Stay close to Shen (the mission ends if he dies) and make good use of Speed Stance to weaken

your enemies as they approach. There are three waves of attack and the first and last will take you past a Heavenly Pot, so take care to use it so you get the best benefit for your health gauge and your Heavenly Gauge.

## Glyph Tips

You can get good value from your Range Stance here, as it'll put multiple hits on the ninjas as they close. You'll then need to switch to Speed Stance when they





get close. Try to concentrate on one target at a time, and keep countering and dodging! Use the Heavenly Pots when you've got a good combo going (say, 40 or 50 hits) and you should be able to pick up all three Glyphs.

## 3 War Machines

Kill 500 soldiers. Simple, right? Well... pretty much. You even start with a cannon, so you should be able to extract a heavy toll (don't forget to use aftertouch to make sure you hit the big groups of enemies) before the close-and-personal starts. Once your ammo is used up, make judicious use of your Range Stance to keep the death flowing. If enemies start to press in too close, dodge your way out of trouble.

Once you've taken care of a half-thou, you have four minutes to destroy two more catapults – also up close and personal. Just run up to the catapults and hit  $\otimes$  when you get to the glowing indicator. Then it's just a matter of following the on-screen prompts. Avoid getting caught up in brawls as you've already done plenty of killing and you're up against the clock. That said, four minutes is plenty of time. Once both catapults have been destroyed, the mission ends.

### Glyph Tips

There are plenty of enemies here, of three varieties: weak soldiers who don't block and don't attack much; soldiers with shields, who know how to fight; and soldiers with axes, who are a real pain. As noted above, Range Stance is definitely helpful here, as is plenty of dodging. If you're short on your Gauge once you've got your 500 kills, you should still have time for a little killing in between catapult destruction; just keep an eye on the clock. To be on the safe side, take out one of the catapults and move to the second so you can take it out quickly when you're done killing (give yourself at least 20 seconds for this).

## 4 Full Circle

Hmm. Missions don't come much simpler than this: run towards your fort. You don't even need to kill anyone.

Unless you're worried about your Heavenly Gauge, that is...

### Glyph Tips

Okay, so you've got just over a minute to fill your Gauge. Run through the first two waves of enemies (so that you're nice and close to the fortress and can successfully end the mission and not get stuck in no-man's-land), then let rip with the Range and Speed Stance attacks. Dodge like crazy to keep your combo ticking over and you'll find that you don't actually need too many kills to get all three Glyphs.

## CHAPTER SIX

Nariko has returned from the dead and she's only got one thing on her mind – bloody vengeance!

## 1 The Goddess

So, our little Nariko's all Goddess-ed up. Sniff. In fact, now she's so awesomely powerful that all she needs to do is touch an enemy and they die. Nice. All you need do is lay waste to your foes. Being a goddess is gooodd...

### Glyph Tips

Big numbers. That's what it's all about. Because you kill enemies with the slightest touch, we once again recommend Range Stance, simply for its reach and the fact that it's now effectively an area-effect weapon. Plunge right on in to the crowd. Then, when you see enemies coming up behind you, switch directions and cut them down like grass.

## 2 The Raven King

This is the first of three rounds with Bohan and your tactics will be similar each time. Your task this time around is to get rid of his green health gauge. He deals out a fair bit of damage (and Nariko, all of a sudden, doesn't) so patience is the key here. Clear out the soldiers with some Range Stance attacks. This will help your gauge and also make it easier to see Bohan. Use Speed Stance on Bohan when he closes; give him a combo or two then dodge away and come in again from another angle. Once you start hitting him you can

switch to Power Stance but he's more likely to block. His own attack pattern revolves around heavy attacks followed by unblockables – obviously, make sure you avoid these.

He also uses Range attacks against you. You have to deflect these back at him by pressing towards him with the right stick and hitting  $\triangle$  just as the projectile is about to hit. This is a great way to deal some serious damage to the big guy. Block the blue attacks from Speed Stance and the orange ones from Power Stance (i.e. hold down  $\square$  as you hit triangle to deflect them).

Finally, if he grabs you, just hammer  $\odot$  or you'll get thumped.

Once his health is depleted, hit  $\odot$  to end the level.

### Glyph Tips

Clear out the soldiers with Range Stance as quickly as you can, as they'll eventually all flee, leaving just you and Bohan inside a magic circle for your dual. Once they're gone, concentrate on using Speed Stance attacks on Bohan to keep your combo number climbing, and dodging to avoid being hit. One tactic that works well is to hit him with a short combo then roll to one side and hit him again. This keeps him off balance and slows his own combo-making down.

## 3 Heaven and hell

So now he can fly. Excellent. Keep on chipping away, as in the previous fight, so you can get rid of Bohan's orange health bar. On the ground, this fight proceeds much as the previous encounter – keep your combos short and keep rolling – but in the air, he has some new tricks.

Periodically Bohan will fly up high. He'll fire barrages of blue and yellow Range attacks. You can either dodge these or reflect them back.

Once his health is gone, get up close and hit  $\odot$  to end the level.

### Glyph Tips

There's only one way to do this: reflect Bohan's attacks back at him. Stand your ground, make sure you're in the correct stance, and hit  $\triangle$  just as the attack is about to hit you. If your timing is on, you'll fill your Gauge (and blast the crap out of Bohan) in no time.

## 4 Redemption

Here we are at last. The final battle. Bohan is down to his last health bar but of course he's saved some new tricks for last. This battle follows the same pattern as the two that preceded it. Fighting on the ground continues in the same manner – lots of dodging, lots of Speed Stance combos, only use Power Stance when you've got an opening and watch out for his unblockable attacks – but in the air he's even tougher. Now he mixes up his barrages between blue and yellow, so watch his hands and make sure you're in the right stance. If his whole body glows yellow he's about to fire a flock of crows at you. These are easy to dodge as they move pretty slowly. And if he laughs as he flies up, get ready to dodge his swooping ram attack, as it's unblockable.

At the one-and-two-thirds health marks, you'll go into short button-prompt sequences to execute some pretty sweet moves. Keep on plugging away and when his health bar is gone another sequence comes up (for the record, it's  $\odot$ ,  $\odot$ ,  $\triangle$ ). Complete this and he'd a goner. Muck it up and he regenerates some health and comes back for more.

### Glyph Tips

This should happen without too much special attention, between the amount of hits you need to lay on Bohan, the necessity of reflecting his Range attacks and the numbers of troops running around at the start. Just keep those sweet hits flowing – without getting hit yourself – and it'll take care of itself.  $\blacktriangleleft$



■ "HEY YOU  
GUUUUUUUUYSSSS!"





Codes, hints, tips, unlockables and more!

# CHEATS

Get the winning edge  
with *OPS*' tricky cheats

## PS3

### BURNOUT PARADISE

#### Unlock retail themed cars

Codes require profile to have a Class A license or better to activate. If you've got some sort of massive problem with over-the-top product placement, these cheats probably aren't for you. We're not exactly sure we'd want to drive around in a Wal-Mart car either though, so you're certainly not alone.

#### bestbuy

Unlocks Best Buy skinned car

#### circuitcity

Unlocks Circuit City skinned car

#### gamestop

Unlocks Gamestop skinned car

#### walmart

Unlocks Wal-Mart skinned car

#### Carbon Cars

These cars are unlocked by collecting or completing the following.

#### Unlockable

##### How to Unlock

#### GT Concept

Drive through all 400 smash gates

#### Hawker

Smash all 120 billboards

#### Hydros Custom

Beat all offline showtimes on the 64 roads

#### Iskusa GT

Beat all offline times on the 64 roads

#### Uberschall

Beat two sets of the online challenges

#### X12

Land all 50 jumps



## PS2

### TWISTED METAL: HEAD ON - EXTRA TWISTED EDITION

#### In Game Cheats

Hold **△** & **□** during gameplay then press the button combination. Do the same thing to turn it off.

**△, △, ↓, ↓**

Infinite Weapons

**↑, ↓, ←, →, →, ←, ↓, ↑**

Invulnerability

**⊗, ⊗, ↑, ↑**

Killer Weapons (super damage)

**⊗, △, ⊗, △**

Mega Guns

**←, ←, ↑, ↓, ←, →**

Radial Blast

**△, ⊗, ⊙, ⊙**

Trade weapons for health

#### Hidden characters.

To unlock the following characters, complete the bonus minigame found in the corresponding level.

#### Crimson Fury

Monaco

#### Hammerhead

Tokyo

#### Mr. Slam

Los Angeles

## PSP

### DISGAEA: AFTERNOON OF DARKNESS

#### Extra Classes

##### Angel

Female Cleric, Knight and Archer all at level 100 or higher.

##### Archer

Level 3 or higher in Bow Weapon Mastery.

##### EDF Soilder

Level 30 or higher Gun

Weapon Mastery.

#### Galaxy Mage

Level a Prism Mage to Level 50.

#### Galaxy Skull

Level a Prism Skull to Level 50.

#### Knight

Female Warrior and Female

Mage each at level 10 or higher

#### Majin

Male Warrior, Brawler, Ninja, Rogue and Scout all at level 200 or higher.

#### Ninja

Male Fighter and Male Warrior with a total level of 10 or higher.

#### Prism Mage

Level a Star Mage to Level 35.

#### Prism Skull

Level a Star Skull to Level 35.

#### Rogue

Both Fighter and Warrior, Males or Females, each at level 5 or higher.

## CHEAT OF THE MONTH

### Devil May Cry 4

Well, this is more of a challenge for you guys than an actual cheat, but here goes... Apparently if you complete 'Dante must Die' mode in *Devil May Cry 4*, you unlock two new costumes: Super Dante and Super Nero. We're really interested in what these bloody things look like, but we just don't have the skill time required to complete *DMC4* on its most difficult setting. Please, please, please could someone finish it, unlock the new outfits, and send a pic to us showing us these new costumes. Er, thanks...



## WTF?

### Assassin's Creed

In Issue 13 we put out the call to all you budding assassins out there to beat a screen we saw online, featuring unfettered destruction and roughly about 50 corpses strewn across the environment. We thought that was a pretty crazy scene, until we saw this, sent in by Samuel Keene. The death in this pic is absolutely inhuman - it's makes us feel kinda dirty, actually. Did we really encourage you lot to do this kind of stuff? Damn... Still, solid job Samuel, old chap - we'll be in touch.

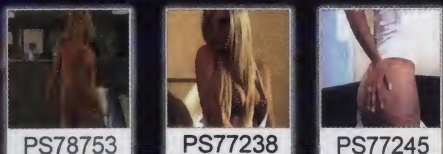




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PS77245



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PS75931

PS75932



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PS78901

PS76522



PS75968

PS75964

PS75941

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Emily Scott  
Wallpaper

PS60306

Emily Scott  
Mobile Screensaver

PS78039

**Sophie Howard**

Sophie  
Video

PS75931

Sophie  
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PS59345

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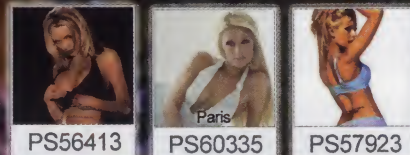
## HOT PICS



PS56765

PS61388

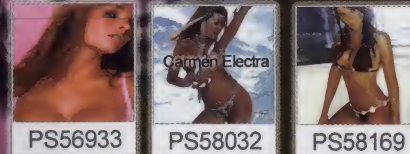
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PS56413

PS60335

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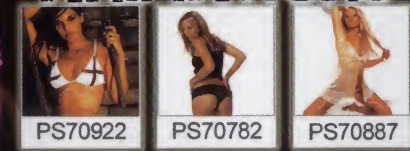


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PS58032

PS58169

## ANIMATIONS



PS70922

PS70782

PS70887



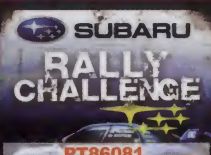
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PS70782

PS70300



PT85943



PT86081



PT85198



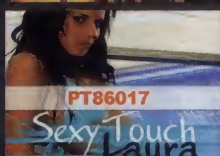
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PT85929



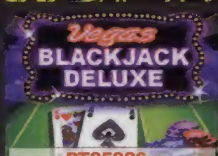
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PT86017



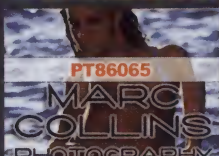
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PT85906



PT86065



PT85904



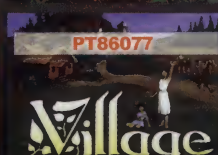
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# DATABASE

All the games  
that matter  
on PS3!

## FUTURE WATCH

The PS3 games to grab in the coming months

### GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

Release: 29 April 2008

So, yeah, we left *Grand Theft Auto IV* here from last month. Can you blame us? Sure, we like to rotate these babies a bit – you know, share the love around – but this is *GTAIV* we're talking about here. This is as big as it gets and, make no mistake dear readers, you will be amazed.

### BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY

Release: 2008

There's certainly no shortage of great games set to hit shelves this year, so it'd be easy to forget this one. Still, we're really interested in how this is going to turn out. A gold heist in the middle of a war, 90% destructible environments and the experience of DICE? We're in.

### MIDNIGHT CLUB: LOS ANGELES

Release: 2008

We've been jonesing for another look at this sucker for months now. Rockstar has dangled the carrot of possibility in front of us on a few occasions before yanking it away, but we're expecting something pretty damn rad when we finally do get our paws on it again. Should smoke *Need for Speed*.

### RESISTANCE 2

Release: 2008

Let's revisit some of the incredible bullet points first. TWO campaign modes (one expressly for single-player and the other designed for up to EIGHT players). A mind-boggling 60 player online mode. Vastly improved visuals and AI, plus (presumably) much, much more.

*Resistance 2* certainly sounds like it'll be the cat's pyjamas. Expect to see plenty of this little number over the coming months.

## PS3 TOP 20

1



### ASSASSIN'S CREED

A landmark in gaming history. Nothing short of awe-inspiring. The missions are samey, but navigating open-worlds will never be the same. The biggest leap since *GTAIII*.

2



### UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE

The best PlayStation exclusive on the market and the best looking console game to date. Frankly, *Uncharted* rocks up to the party and just plain owns everything...

3



### CALL OF DUTY 4

Relentlessly exciting. Includes a dizzying variety of combat scenarios and stacks of bleeding-edge military hardware. You'd have to be insane, or a girly-man, to miss it.

4



### ROCK BAND

The best party game ever and a triumph in every department, with a killer set list and rad instruments. You wanted the best; you got the best – *Rock Band* rocks.

5



### MOTORSTORM

Fast, hard, dirty and utterly exhilarating. *MotorStorm* is essential for everyone's PS3. Not even the lack of split-screen can detract from this fantastic racer.

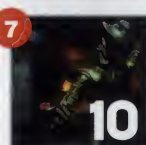
6



### RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN

The perfect launch title for PS3, and possibly the best console FPS ever made. The massive 40-player online deathmatches are more fun than you can imagine.

7



### THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

One of the deepest adventures we've ever laid eyes on. Simply put – awesome. This is arguably the only RPG you'll need for some time to come.

8



### SKATE

A groundbreaking title that resets the bar for sports games in general. It kickflips *Tony Hawk's* to the curb with its simple approach. Irresistibly addictive and downright essential.

9



### WARHAWK

There is no better multiplayer game on PS3 right now. Tighter than a bull's arse on fight night and smoother than a glass of Guinness, it's a superior piece of software.

10



### BURNOUT PARADISE

Despite the lack of the old Crash Mode, the overwhelming majority of *Burnout Paradise* rocks harder than Slash during an epic guitar solo. So fast, so wild.

11



### HEAVENLY SWORD

*Heavenly Sword* is one of the best games we've seen in ages. A beautiful, yet deep, masterpiece and an awesomely enjoyable ride, albeit a rather short one.

12



### GUITAR HERO III

Captures everything perfect about *Guitar Hero* with the best tracklist yet, but very nearly spoiled it all with the ridiculous new Battle Mode.

13



### COLIN McRAE DIRT

*Colin McRae DIRT* is an ambitious, accessible racer with a surprising amount of depth. The best rally sim ever? You better believe it. Rest in peace big guy.

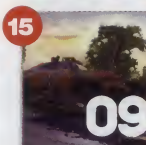
14



### THE DARKNESS

Tentacles and guns – the perfect combination. Stunning, original and gory as hell. You'd have to be dim to miss *The Darkness*.

15



### STUNTMAN: IGNITION

The vehicular equivalent of a 10-hour-long orgasm. Gentlemen, start your boners. *Stuntman: Ignition* succeeds in upending the original in every way.

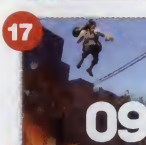
16



### RATCHET & CLANK FUTURE: TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION

The biggest, wildest, most interesting, varied and downright gool ol' fashioned fun adventure these two have been part of.

17



### THE ORANGE BOX

A stellar package; ripe, in season and packed full of vitamin value. If there isn't one title here that does it for you your gaming license is null and void.

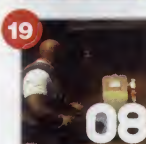
18



### TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX VEGAS

This Vegas adventure is definitely worth a look. A slick, gorgeous, accessible and utterly entertaining tactical shooter.

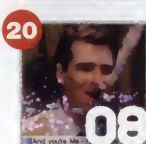
19



### THE CLUB

Who cares if *Resident Evil 4*'s Mercenaries mode did it first – Sega's game reinvents the genre. Original, compulsive and fun – this is one club we recommend you join.

20



### SINGSTAR

*SingStar* will rule Friday nights for the foreseeable future. Should last as long as the PS3 does providing Sony pulls its finger out with more downloadable tracks.



# PS3

**ARMORED CORE 4** 7  
A far better alternative to *Mobile Suit Gundam*.

**BEOWULF** 6  
Has the dubious honour of ticking every game cliché.

**BLADESTORM: THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR** 6  
A solid mix of genres wrapped in an intriguing tale.

**BLAZING ANGELS II: SECRET MISSIONS OF WWII** 6  
Not quite the ace of aces at this stage.

**CALL OF DUTY 3** 7  
A solid but surprisingly unspectacular shooter.

**CLIVE BARKER'S JERICHO** 6  
Sick and twisted but not enough variety.

**CONAN** 7  
A bulldog of bloodletting, savage adventure and boobies.

**DEVIL MAY CRY 4** 7  
A worthy entry into the series but the backtracking spoils it.

**DEF JAM: ICON** 8  
Somehow it's won its way into our hearts. Stupid fun.

**THE EYE OF JUDGEMENT** 5  
Impressive tech, but it's still a \$160 card game.

**F.E.A.R.** 8  
A chilling ride but the graphics are a bit of a shocker.

**FIFA 08** 8  
Finally puts *FIFA* on level terms with *Pro Evolution*.

**FIFA STREET 3** 7  
The saviour for your multiplayer soul. Simple but fun.

**FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3** 8  
Boasts visuals that will knock the teeth out of you.

**FOLKLORE** 8  
Great graphics, memorable characters. A sweet surprise.

**FORMULA ONE CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION** 9  
Looks great and plays great. F1 fans, you've been called.

**FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINES** 7  
Brims with potential but fails to live up to it.

**GENJI: DAYS OF THE BLADE** 5  
Plotting gameplay that belongs on the Atari 2600.

**THE GODFATHER: THE DON'S EDITION** 6  
Fine, but do yourself a favour and get the PS2 version.

**THE GOLDEN COMPASS** 4  
Uninspired level design and dull quests make this a chore.

**HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX** 6  
Decent, but its chore-like structure will bore most.

**JUICED 2: HOT IMPORT NIGHTS** 7  
A top bit of racing fluff, although it's all a tad generic.

**KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN** 6  
One part *Hitman*, one part Michael Mann; mostly a let down.

**LAIR** 5  
A massive let-down. It feels rushed and unfinished.

**LOST PLANET: EXTREME CONDITION** 6  
Solid enough, but a lazy port and a visual let-down.

## 5 FILMS THAT COULD BE RAD GAMES



**COMMANDO**  
There probably isn't enough content here for a whole game, but maybe his daughter could get, you know, kidnapped a few more times.



**WHERE EAGLES DARE**  
The WWII game that needs to get made. Behind-the-lines, a Nazi castle, spy vs. spy, Clint Eastwood – what's the hold-up?



**RAMBO**  
Hell. Yes. This movie already has a body-count bigger than some games. Pepper it with Vietnam flashbacks and booyah. Job done.



**TRUE LIES**  
Action comedy at its finest. Horse vs. motorcycle. Harrier vs. building. Arnie vs. evil-doers. "You know my handcuffs? I picked them." Zing!



**BULLITT**  
Driver crossed with Steve McQueen? Busting heads as Bullitt and screaming through San Fran in a '68 Mustang? Somebody, please!

**MADDEN NFL 08** 7  
Some great improvements and plenty of modes.

**MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE** 9  
Great co-op and an exhaustive list of Marvel's greatest.

**MEDAL OF HONOR AIRBORNE** 6  
A dinosaur of an FPS – wait for *Brothers in Arms* instead.

**MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: TARGET IN SIGHT** 3  
A rubber godzilla of a title. What a pipe blocker!

**MX VS. ATV UNTAMED** 6  
Feels like a PS2 port, looks like a PS2 port. Disappointing.

**NBA 08** 5  
Fails to pick a side (sim or arcade) and so fails at both.

**NBA 2K8** 8  
Not as pretty as *LIVE* but has more depth.

**NBA LIVE 08** 8  
Best of its kind. B-ball devotees will adore it, guaranteed.

**NBA STREET HOMECOURT** 8  
The brashest, most addictive arcade basketball game yet.

**NEED FOR SPEED CARBON** 8  
The last *NFS* street racer before the series went legit.

**NEED FOR SPEED PROSTREET** 8  
Great smoke, but more depth would've been nice.

**NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA** 8  
A treasure trove of gaming goodness, super tough.

**PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END** 6  
A very shallow slash 'em up. Ye be warned.

**PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2008** 8  
Still the best soccer in the biz, but the graphics are dire.

**SEGA RALLY** 7  
Not so much a revolution as one hell of a renovation.

**SONIC THE HEDGEHOG** 4  
Mostly terrible. Avoid at all costs.

**STRANGLEHOLD** 7  
*Max Payne* inspired action, plenty of frantic fun.

**TIMESHIFT** 6  
A solid time-bender that doesn't quite reach 88mph.

**TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: AW2** 8  
A tense, realistic shooter, but *Rainbow Six Vegas* is better.

**TONY HAWK'S PROVING GROUND** 6  
Struggles to escape the shadow of *SKATE*.

**TUROK** 7  
Packs plenty of bite but it's missing a few teeth.

**UNREAL TOURNAMENT 3** 8  
Gorgeous and gory, but the lack of split-screen blows.

**VIRTUA FIGHTER 5** 8  
As hardcore as fighting games get.

**VIRTUA TENNIS 3** 8  
Some of the best fun four people can have on one PS3.

**WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2008** 7  
A solid entry. A few new additions but still plays the same.

# MAGIC MOMENTS

Great moments in PlayStation history remembered!



**THE GAME:** Syphon Filter 2  
**THE CONSOLE:** PlayStation  
**THE YEAR:** 2000

**THE MOMENT:** This was a tough one. It's hard to really do justice to exactly how good the original *Syphon Filter* trilogy was for its time – if you didn't play it back around the turn of the century it'll be difficult to appreciate now, on account of it being so... old (and by old we mean clunky and fairly hideous). If you did, however, you should have fond memories of this absolutely outstanding action series. Anybody who still regards this *Syphon Filter* as a poor-man's *Metal Gear Solid* is severely mistaken – it's a true classic.

Picking one magic moment from the scores we remember was no easy task. Each *Syphon Filter* game was a non-stop bullet-fest from go to woah, punctuated with oodles of killer set pieces. The original had plenty of good'uns – setting scumbags alight with your taser while commando-rolling through plate-glass windows and the race against time (and some rapidly closing blast doors) in the final seconds to disable a missile that would trigger WWII are just a couple. The sequel was no slouch either, the Chinese prison breakout was superb and figuring out how to whack that backstabbing, armour-plated sonofabitch Chance by knocking him into some whirling rotor-blades was certainly memorable. Of course, *Syphon Filter 3* had that particularly neat across-the-street, hotel-to-hotel assassination right at the beginning – and didn't stop getting better.

It's like trying to choose your favourite few seconds from the Bourne trilogy. What's better, the Paris car chase of the Tangier fistfight? It's a dilly of a pickle.

In the end we've gone with Gabe 'I eat gravel for breakfast' Logan's shootout atop an out-of-control train in *Syphon Filter 2*. Blasting terrorists off speeding carriages, fighting your way to the front before the hurtling loco made it to the (inevitably destroyed) bridge and tumbled into the valley below? Epic.

Now whose mother do we have to threaten to get *Syphon Filter* on the PS3?



NEXT



# MGS4

Hands on with the epic *Metal Gear Solid 4* - action at its beard-stroking best!  
Don't miss the full scoop on what may well be Snake's final adventure!



- Gran Turismo 5: Prologue reviewed!
- Hands on with Race Driver: GRID
- GTAIV's multiplayer thrashed!

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PA44052	PA47086	Leona Lewis - Bleeding Love
PA44336	—	The Veronicas - Untouched
PA43996	PA47102	Alicia Keys - No One
PA44084	PA47100	Santana feat. Chad Kroeger - Into The Night
PA44226	—	The Pottbelleez - Don't Hold Back
PA43539	PA46994	Timbaland feat. Keri Hilson - The Way I Are
PA44116	PA47146	Maroon 5 - Won't Go Home Without You
PA43988	PA47095	Mika - Happy Ending
PA44111	PA47151	Fergie - Clumsy
PA44118	PA47107	Sean Kingston - Me Love
PA43960	PA47088	Matchbox Twenty - How Far We've Come
PA44122	PA47111	Avril Lavigne - Hot
PA44055	PA47109	Rihanna feat. Ne-Yo - Hate That I Love You
PA44053	PA47087	Chris Brown - Kiss Kiss
—	PA46981	Plain White T's - Hey There Delilah
PA44124	—	Linkin Park - Shadow Of The Day
PA44062	—	The Veronicas - Hook Me Up
PA44056	PA47091	I Can't vs F.L. Grand - LEME THINK ABOUT
PA43997	PA47083	Kanye West - Good Life
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